

# A.C. GILBERT'S HERITAGE

Edited by Donald J. Heimbürger







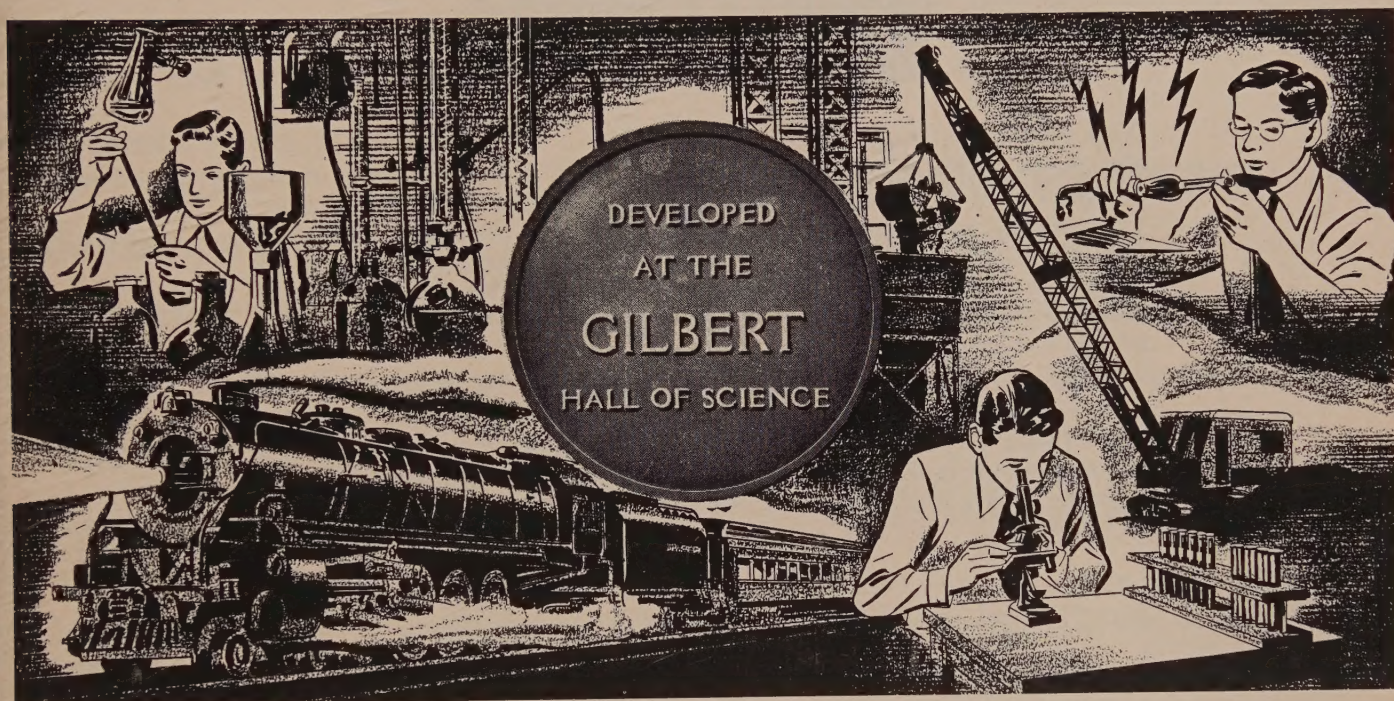






# A.C. GILBERT'S HERITAGE

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DEDICATED TO  
**MAURICE H. ROMER**



The closing of the A.C. Gilbert Company in 1967 was also the end of the 40-year career of Maurice H. Romer with American Flyer trains. Since 1967, Maury has been the train collector's friend, providing a constant source of information and stories of his first-hand experiences about his work and fellow workers at the Gilbert Company. He was also highly valued by the Company as the following excerpt from the November, 1962 edition of *Flyergram* attests:

*Then there's Maury Romer, known in the trade as the train man's train man. Maury was in the train business when the Sioux Indians were trying to stop the Union Pacific with lariats and war whoops. He knows how to make 'em, run 'em and sell 'em. He knows how to light up the eyes of a small boy and make him whisper, 'Daddy, that's the train I want!'*

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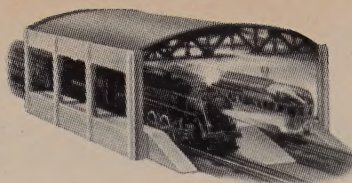


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# A.C. Gilbert's Heritage

I have a reoccurring dream that goes something like this: I'm a kid about 10 years old and I go to a local department store with my mom. Upon entering the store, I tell her I'd like to go to the train department to look around. The year is about 1957, and S gauge Gilbert American Flyer trains are experiencing their second highest sales volume in history.

As a 10-year-old kid, I literally go bug-eyed at the large stock of choice items in the store: there is a glassed display case of the 263 0-6-0 Pennsylvania yard goats, some 283 Pacifics in Northwestern lettering, some 293's in New Haven lettering and some 343 0-8-0's in NKP lettering. Taking two full shelves of the display are the Pennsylvania K-5's with Smoke, Choo-Choo and Pull-Mor Power, the New York Central Pacemakers with the built-in whistle, and my favorites, the mighty No. 336 Union Pacific Northerns (21½ inches long with the tender). Oh what a sight!

The store was finding that diesels were starting to invade the steam scene more and more, so they also had an appealing display of the

growlers. Included were brand new, without even a scratch from shipping from the factory, New Clippers in the colorful orange, white and black New Haven road scheme, the 499 NH electrics and the splashy 377 and 378 Texas & Pacific units dressed up in orange and black (there were four pair sets of these!). Attracting more attention, however, were the Northern Pacific "Main Street of the Northwest" two-tone green and white Alco PA diesels, the war-bonnet Santa Fe PA's in yellow, blue and black, and the passenger Santa Fe PA's with diesel roar. Oh yes, there were a couple of new-in-the-box Baldwins, but for some reason the sales clerk hadn't unpacked them for display as yet.

The interesting part of my dream is that I'm only 10 years of age, but somehow I look upon this array of AF trains as something that will be rare in the future, something that is only here for a while. Somehow I've lived in the future and seen what happened to all these beautiful trains: they disappeared or were snatched up in someone's collection. This makes my dream all the more intriguing because I know what I'm seeing is someday going to be part of A.C. Gilbert's heritage. And in my dream, I also see the huge AF display layout the store has with three separate operating trains, and the many accessories like the Milk Car and Platform, the Floodlight Tower, Revolving Aircraft Beacon and the Talking Station ("...New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and all points West! Who-o-o...Who-o-o...American Flyer through train!...")

"In all the world, only American Flyer comes so close to matching the appearance and performance of real trains," Gilbert said about his trains in 1957. And I can believe it. My dream is perhaps a dream like many of you have as well. It's a dream that relives part of the A.C. Gilbert history. Maybe you re-live your dream mostly around Christmas when you set up the Gilbert trains around the Christmas tree. Or, as I know many of you do, the dream and memories are rekindled much more often with large AF layouts permanently gracing your basement, attics, or garages. You remember as a kid all the new-in-the-box locomotives, cars and accessories at some train shop, or maybe a hard-



A.C. Gilbert



ware store, in your own town. Your father would take you in the shop around Christmas to look over the newest line-up, and if you were lucky, you'd find an MKT yellow-and-brown box car or an operating wrecking crane under the tree that year. If you were even luckier, maybe the Pacemaker set would be your present that year. You knew then, as a kid, you'd have some kind of life-long attachment to these powerful-looking, sturdy locomotives and brightly painted cars. And you'd want your own children to enjoy these same trains once you were a father and had the chance to show your kids the fun of model railroading with Gilbert trains.

If you have the same kind of dream I have, you understand why the history—the heritage—of A.C. Gilbert and everything he did is so important today—now. The trains he made—as well as the other toys—are in the past. All we have left are the memories of a great model manufacturer, and a growing scarcity of the better products that Gilbert employees made. All we have left are torn and fading catalogs, marred and sagging plastic shells and rusting T-rail track. But what we can preserve in our collections, and in books such as this, will help

us and future generations to remember why the A.C. Gilbert Company was so successful for the years it was in business. From these, we will still be able to re-live the Gilbert years over and over again, and to keep that dream of ours alive and fresh.

In our own separate way, we together as a group, keep the memories and the heritage of Gilbert alive. I think that is a most fitting tribute to American Flyer and to A.C. Gilbert. I think he'd be proud to see how much his trains and other toys have meant to each one of us in our own way. May his dream, and ours, continue to live on. It's a wonderful dream worth preserving.

*Donald J. Heimburger*

Donald J. Heimburger  
Publisher

Board of Directors of the A.C. Gilbert Company  
C.W. Tansley   H.L. Trisch   A.C. Gilbert   A.L. Richmond





# The Gilbert Family

Frank Newton Gilbert  
Alfred Carlton Gilbert

Alfred Carlton Gilbert, Jr.  
Frank Wellington Gilbert

## THE GILBERT FAMILY

1581. FRANK NEWTON<sup>a</sup> GILBERT (*Simeon,<sup>b</sup> David,<sup>c</sup> Elias,<sup>d</sup> Samuel,<sup>e</sup> Samuel,<sup>f</sup> Henry,<sup>g</sup> Thomas,<sup>h</sup> Thomas<sup>i</sup>), born at Cooper, Kalamazoo Co., Mich., Nov. 12, 1848; died at New Haven, Conn., June 1, 1916; married first at Salem, Ore., Sept. 21, 1876, EMMA FRANCES GILBERT, born at Salem, Ore., Mar. 13, 1854; died there, Nov. 1, 1877; daughter of Isaac Newton and Marietta (Stanton) Gilbert; married second at Hubbard, Marion Co., Ore., June 15, 1880, CHARLOTTE ANNIE HOVENDEN, born at Hubbard, Ore., Nov. 17, 1860; daughter of Alfred and ——— (——) Hovenden.*

Frank Newton Gilbert, whose autobiography follows, was responsible for starting this genealogy. He was much interested in discovering the history of his ancestors of the Gilbert name and during his visits to New Haven, found time to devote much of the latter part of his life to this work. He arranged to prepare a five or six generation genealogy of the Gilbert family and began searching in England to find, if possible, the English home of Thomas Gilbert, the emigrant ancestor. In writing his own life story before he died, Frank Newton Gilbert said:

"I was born on my father's farm at Cooper's Corner, about six miles north of Kalamazoo, Mich., being the youngest of four boys. My father, Simeon Gilbert, with wife and family in 1850 or 1851 moved from the western part of New York State to Jamestown, Indiana, a little town in the northeast part of the State. There was another town in Indiana having the same name, so the post office for the little northern town was called Crooked Creek. There were no railroads at that time in this section of Michigan or Indiana, so the moving to Indiana was done by wagon and it took several days to make the trip, although only about seventy miles, as most of the way was through an unbroken forest, over bad roads, and to add to the difficulty, I, then a boy of only three years, was taken down with the measles. So camp had to be made until the measles were well broken out, then the journey was resumed. There was a great deal of horse-stealing going on in that part of the country at the time and in making the trip from Michigan to Indiana, several times during the day we would meet some one hunting stolen horses.

"The little town father moved to was situated at the outlet of a beautiful lake called Lake George. Here we built a sawmill and grist mill and also had a general merchandise store. He had a partner in the store, the firm being Gilbert & Hutchinson, but a few years later he bought his partner's interest. My father and mother lived there until their deaths. My mother died May 17, 1862, and my father died April 26, 1869.

"My early school days were spent in the little country school house and later I went to the high school in Coldwater, Michigan, which was fourteen miles north of Jamestown.

"In the early part of March, 1869, when I had just passed my twentieth year, I persuaded my father to let me go to Oregon, where he had a brother, Isaac Newton Gilbert, who crossed the plains in 1844, and was living on a farm near Salem, Oregon. I went to New York and came by way of the Isthmus of Panama. I had to stay in San Francisco nearly three weeks, awaiting a steamer. In those days a steamer for Oregon sailed only once in three weeks. I arrived in Portland on the 25th day of April. At that time Portland had only about 7500 inhabitants.

"On my trip from New York were the two Spaulding boys, Marcus and Martin (twins), both of whom settled and died here in Portland. I stayed only a short time in Portland and went to Salem. I was taken into the home of my uncle, Isaac N. Gilbert, where I lived for a number of years and was always considered by him and his wife, up to the time of their deaths, as one of their own children. In fact I spent many happy years in their home. I worked on my uncle's farm for a short time, and then secured employment in the store of A. I. Nicklen, which was in the old Griswold Building, southwest corner of Commercial and State Streets. We used to keep all our empty drygoods boxes out on the sidewalk so as to keep up a healthy appearance. It made a great rendezvous for the town loafers. They would

sit on the boxes, tell stories and whittle the boxes. I remember hearing the proprietor say one day, if time was money, there was more money spent on his store corner than in all Salem.

"Some two years later I secured the position as bookkeeper with the Breyman Bros. (Werner and Eugene Breyman). They were then keeping a store in the old Moore Building, south side of Commercial Street, between State and Court. My brother, Andy, who came to Oregon a year later than I, was clerking for them at this time. We were with this firm for nine years. The position of bookkeeper sounds good in these days, but in those days, it meant selling goods in the day time and doing the bookkeeping at night and in early morning, after sweeping and cleaning the store. In those years we handled large quantities of dried apples, butter, eggs and bacon. It was brought in by the farmers who came to trade with the Breyman from Yamhill, Polk, Lewis and Benton Counties, and we had some customers that came once a year from east of the mountains. All this fruit, bacon and eggs had to be packed and shipped to San Francisco, so that was also a night job.

"I remember well when the Breyman's decided to build on the corner where their old store now stands, the southeast corner of Commercial and Court Streets. It was quite a serious question to decide. A great many doubted if it was wise to build so far out of the business center of town, and besides there were no buildings to speak of on that side of the street.

"After leaving the Breyman's, my brother and I opened up a little brokerage and insurance office under the name of The Gilbert Bros. We also had the agency for the river boats. We rented a small corner from Charles Uzaforage out of his shoe store. Later we rented a room in the old Farmers Block, down near the Chemecketa Hotel. Here we spent many happy and prosperous years. Just previous to moving from the Charles Uzaforage store, I married Annie Hovenden of Hubbard, the youngest daughter of Alfred Hovenden, a pioneer of 1849. The first year of our married life we boarded with Mrs. Joseph Holman, afterwards wife of Thomas McF. Patton. Then we rented the Tom Cann house, directly north and back of Eugene Breyman's. Here our oldest son, Harold, was born. Then we built our new home, southwest corner of Cottage and Marion Streets, and here our other two children were born, Alfred and Wellington. In 1894 I sold my interest in the business to my brother Andrew, and moved with my family to northern Idaho, where he had banking interests with Mr. Bush of Salem and Mr. Corbett of Portland. We stayed there about five years or until the troublesome times of 1893 to 1898 were over. Then I came to Portland in the spring of 1900 and bought a half interest with the late Wiley B. Allen in the piano business. I became president of the Allen & Gilbert-Ramaker Company, the oldest and largest music dealers in the Pacific Northwest at that time.

"In 1909, while attending the graduation exercises at Yale University where my son, Alfred Carlton Gilbert, was graduated as a doctor of medicine, I found that he had started a small manufacturing business in a woodshed in Westville. His enthusiasm and my confidence in him led me to loan him \$5,000.00 to help him get started and organize what was then known as the Mysto Manufacturing Company. Two years later I bought the interest of my son's partner for \$4,500.00."

The next five years Frank Newton Gilbert frequently visited his son and while visiting in New Haven he was taken down with a severe attack of gallstones, was operated on and died in 1916.

Mr. Gilbert was a member of the Congregational church at Portland and his character was that of the highest type of Christian gentleman. He was deeply loved by his family and his personality was such that he made friends wherever he went and was greatly admired by many people.

### Children:

2282 i. HAROLD SIMEON,<sup>10</sup> b. Apr. 23, 1882; m. BESSIE K. LUCKEY.

2283 ii. ALFRED CARLTON, b. Feb. 15, 1884; m. MARY THOMPSON.

2284 iii. FRANK WELLINGTON, b. May 19, 1891; m. LAVELLE YOUNG.





F.W. Gilbert

Frank Wellington Gilbert joined the business of his brother in 1916 as a general foreman and worked up to Vice President and General Manager until he resigned in 1944 to run the tool business of Chellis Company, now known as Gilbert & Richards, Inc., Camden, Conn.

2283. ALFRED CARLTON<sup>10</sup> GILBERT (*Frank Newton,<sup>9</sup> Simeon,<sup>8</sup> David,<sup>7</sup> Elias,<sup>6</sup> Samuel,<sup>5</sup> Samuel,<sup>4</sup> Henry,<sup>3</sup> Thomas,<sup>2</sup> Thomas<sup>1</sup>*), born at Salem, Ore., Feb. 15, 1884; married at Seattle, Wash., Sept. 19, 1908, MARY THOMPSON, born at McCune, Kan., July 20, 1884; daughter of James Munroe and Mary De Ella (Means) Thompson of Long Beach, Calif.

Alfred Carlton Gilbert attended Pacific University at Forest Grove, Oregon in 1900, and in 1904 he attended Yale University where he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine. His first serious struggle was to develop a frail body into a strong one. He was always interested in athletics and his father took a great deal of pride in his athletic career. He started his athletic career in a barn in Moscow, Idaho, which his father encouraged him to change into a gymnasium. While attending Pacific University, his first record of achievement was breaking the world's record for chinning the bar. He won the Northwest Wrestling Championship and held the Northwest Pole Vaulting Record for many years. Besides being captain of the University track team, he was field captain of the football team on which he played quarterback. A year later he entered Yale University and as a freshman he won his first Y as all-around gymnastic champion. The next year he won the Intercollegiate Wrestling Championship. In 1908 he broke the world's record for pole vaulting at the Olympic try-outs in Philadelphia and won first place for the United States in the Olympic Games at London.

Just prior to his graduation from Yale, he began to manufacture, under the name of Mysto Manufacturing Company, in a woodshed in Westville, magical apparatus and soon became the largest manufacturer of magical apparatus in the world. He was a talented magician himself, which had been a life-long hobby of his since he was a boy. From this beginning has grown the present large business now known as The A. C. Gilbert Company, the largest manufacturer of educational playthings in the world. In 1913 he invented Erector, which is considered one of the world's most popular toys for boys. From that time the business went ahead by leaps and bounds to its present great size. In telling how Erector originated, Mr. Gilbert said: "I was wishing I could devise a toy that included parts which when put together would reproduce the working models that engineers build. While I was thinking about it on a train to New York, I was impressed with the structural steel work then being erected for the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad." From this germ of an idea came the invention of the world's most popular toy, Erector.

Alfred Carlton Gilbert organized the Toy Manufacturers of the U. S. A. and was its first president. He represented the Toy Manufacturers of the U. S. A. in an interesting hearing at the time of the first World War before President Wilson's Council of National Defense to save the toy industry, which he did. He served for many years as a director. On his return from the Olympic Games in 1908, he was made a life member of the Multnomah Athletic Club. He served for many years as a member of the Olympic Committee and was manager and chef de mission of three Olympic Games and also served for many years as a member of the Athletic Board of Control at Yale and was Chairman of the Track Advisory Committee at Yale, is a life member of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States and served for many years as a member of its Board of Governors.

Alfred Carlton Gilbert inherited his father's love for the big outdoors and has been a big game hunter most of his life and shot some of the outstanding trophies of North American big game in British Columbia and Alaska. He has been a member of the Boone and Crockett Club and The Camp Fire Club of America, and organized the Boone and Crockett Club's Big Game Competition.



A.C. Gilbert at his desk

See: *Who's Who in America; Business Executives of America*, 1950; *Who's Who in the East*, 1951; *Biography Index*, Jan. 1946-July 1949, and notices in *Reader's Guide*.

Children, born at New Haven, Conn.:

- i. CHARLOTTE,<sup>11</sup> b. June 19, 1911; m. Sept. 8, 1934, ROBERT FISKE CHASE of New Haven, Conn. Children are *Charlotte Anne*, b. June 1, 1936; *William Gilbert*, b. May 28, 1938; *Mary Ellen*, b. Mar. 25, 1946.
- ii. LUCRETIA, b. Apr. 4, 1917; m. May 22, 1936, PAUL CARLTON MARSTED of Cortland, N. Y. Children are *Paul Severin*, b. Jan. 16, 1939; *Jeffery Gilbert*, b. Nov. 25, 1941. Divorced Oct. 2, 1948. Lucretia married (2), Feb. 10, 1951, GEORGE ROWBOTTOM, 2nd of Waterbury, Conn. Child by second marriage, *Archer* (girl), b. Oct. 30, 1951.
- 3410 iii. ALFRED CARLTON, b. Dec. 1, 1919; m. Nov. 28, 1942, JULIE JEAN TIBBETTS of Farmington, Conn.

3410. ALFRED CARLTON<sup>12</sup> GILBERT, JR. (*Alfred Carlton,<sup>10</sup> Frank Newton,<sup>9</sup> Simeon,<sup>8</sup> David,<sup>7</sup> Elias,<sup>6</sup> Samuel,<sup>5</sup> Samuel,<sup>4</sup> Henry,<sup>3</sup> Thomas,<sup>2</sup> Thomas<sup>1</sup>*), born Dec. 1, 1919 at New Haven, Conn.; married Nov. 28, 1942, JULIE JEAN TIBBETTS of Farmington, Conn., daughter of Howard Llewellyn and Julie (Sherman) Tibbetts.

Alfred Carlton Gilbert, Jr., attended Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., and graduated cum laude 1937; attended Yale University and majored in electrical engineering, graduating with high honors in 1941. From September, 1941, to June, 1946, he was a design engineer with the General Electric Company at Schenectady, N. Y. From 1946 to the present time (1953) he has been with the A. C. Gilbert Co., being now secretary and treasurer. He is a member of Tau Beta Pi, National Engineering Honor Society, Associate Member of Sigma Xi, President of the Manufacturers' Division of the New Haven Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of the Speakers' Bureau, Vice President of the Manufacturers' Association of New Haven County, and Director of the United Fund of Greater New Haven.

Children:

- i. JULIE ANNE, b. July 20, 1944 at Schenectady, N. Y.
- ii. ALFRED CARLTON III, b. June 28, 1946 at New Haven, Conn.
- iii. JOHN HOWARD, b. Apr. 18, 1950 at New Haven, Conn.
- iv. DAVID THOMPSON, b. Apr. 5, 1953 at New Haven, Conn.



# Window into the A.C. Gilbert Company

Paul C. Nelson interviews Maury Romer.

*This interview with Maury Romer occurred on October 17 and 21, 1981. Romer worked initially with Flyer in Chicago, beginning there in 1927. When A.C. Gilbert bought the American Flyer name, Maury moved to New Haven, and was first in charge of the service department, beginning in 1938. From 1945 to 1958 he was engineer in charge of the train line; from 1958 to 1963 he was sales engineer. His final position with the company was that of sales promotional manager.*

*Romer is interviewed here by Paul C. Nelson, an American Flyer S gauge collector.*

**Nelson:** First of all, I would like to ask you about the Game Train. In a previous conversation you mentioned that the Game Train idea was yours originally. Would you comment on that?

**Romer:** Yes. I have down in my basement the original idea that I presented. It is a large map of the United States and there are several small locomotives to be used as markers on the map. There are several different games involving the running, stopping and reversing of the train. The little cast locomotives were used, as mentioned, as markers, and you could proceed, you could pick up a load here, and deliver there, and things of that nature.

**Nelson:** That sounds interesting.

**Romer:** And as I said in our earlier conversation, I presented this idea, figured it would be a novelty type thing, but the people I was dealing with at the company then had other ideas. We had a new products manager who came to us from Montgomery Ward and this man thought that it was a great idea, that it would be a great thing. But, he figured you needed somebody behind this who had some experience in games, so he went out and hired a man who was supposed to have been a successful inventor of several games, and had him go to work on it. And, what they came up with just didn't do the job.

**Nelson:** It just wasn't of adequate quality?

**Romer:** Well, (chuckle), it just didn't appear to be much of a game.

**Nelson:** Yes, that's true. So, as a result, they had a lot of those that were not sold, isn't that right? It seems like I've heard that it wasn't a very good seller.

**Romer:** Yes, they had a lot of remaining inventory, right.

**Nelson:** At any rate, the idea of a Game Train was yours initially, but they totally changed it, and came up with something far different than what you had envisioned.

**Romer:** That's right.

**Nelson:** Any other ideas, Maury, that you suggested, that either were used in one form or another, changed completely, or others that you thought would have been just great, but were not used at all?

**Romer:** I guess there were. The thing is that a lot of times we had to look at it from the standpoint of tool costs;

how much money we were putting into it, and what we expected in return. To determine those costs, after you came up with an idea, you brought it along to a certain stage where you could see on paper just what it was going to look like. You had draftsmen draw up and make models, a paper model or a wood model, or what we used to call breadboard models. You'd get them up to that phase of the game, and then you'd hold a meeting wherein you had tool engineers and production people from the plant going over this with a fine tooth comb, evaluating how much money is going to have to go into tools, what you are going to do production-wise, how much you can sell this for, and what your profit is going to be. Often, you'd wind up thinking it's just not worth it, so it was put aside. We had a museum full of items of that nature—items that were designed, but not put into production. Eventually they went to New York, were sold in the auction, and whatever happened to them, Lord only knows.

## THE MUSEUM

**Nelson:** Now, the museum, was that in New Haven?

**Romer:** Yes. We called it the museum. It was just a place to store all this kind of stuff that you may want to look back at some day.

**Nelson:** Was that open to the public at various times?

**Romer:** No, it was strictly for the engineering and production departments. There were ideas in there from way, way back, from the beginning of Gilbert's time. There were a lot of really screwy items in there, and some that you wondered why they didn't make. Others were first samples off of a line, or something, so it was just a good collection.

**Nelson:** It sounds fascinating. You say that some of them were really screwy. Are there any that particularly come to your mind?

**Romer:** There was an old coffee maker that Gilbert got into way back. It was a real freaky coffee maker. Right now, I can't think of anything else, but it was really filled up with a lot of stuff.

We did find it very helpful to go down there from time to time. Let's say we're going to start developing ideas for the coming year. Maybe we're going to make up a number of new train sets and you figure you needed some new rolling stock in the line. You might go out and get a half a dozen pictures of, let's say, box cars, or something like that, depending on what you've got in mind. I'd show the pictures to a model maker; I had a model maker who was very good at painting and lettering and so forth. I also had a draftsman who was very good at that. I'd give the model maker a photograph of the car and have him paint the item as it should be. Maybe we'd have a half a dozen possibilities. We'd then have different people from the sales department, from engineering, and from various departments come in, and get their opinions. Maybe we'd take a few women out of the factory who were working on the production line and get them up there and have



them look at the possibilities and ask them, "What's your idea? Which one do you think your son would enjoy?" We'd wind up with two of the possibilities perhaps, and the others would go back on a shelf in the museum.

**Nelson:** You mention that you had a very good model maker. Do you recall his name?

**Romer:** Oh, we had several. The particular one that did the lettering was a fellow by the name of Andy Carano. And prior to Andy, I had Fred Smith. Fred was a man who had built many, many model airplanes. He became a good artist.

**Nelson:** In what other ways were you involved in planning?

**Romer:** I was involved in the planning, for instance, of passenger trains. Let's say we wanted to make a new passenger train. We'd paint the whole thing, maybe painting one side one railroad, and the other side a different one. We'd put it up on the shelf, and we'd have three or four different trains to look at. If we didn't like that side, we could turn it around and look at what the other side looked like. I know we did B&O, and the two Canadian roads. I can't remember now the others, but there were a lot of different ones that we painted up. We started off with the Santa Fe, and then the head of the sales department wanted to put in the Comet, and the Rocket. Later on we went into the Union Pacific and the Northern Pacific.

**Nelson:** Those last two you mentioned, plus the Missouri Pacific, are among the most sought after passenger trains, and understandably so, I suppose, because of the bright colors, and because of the relatively short supply.

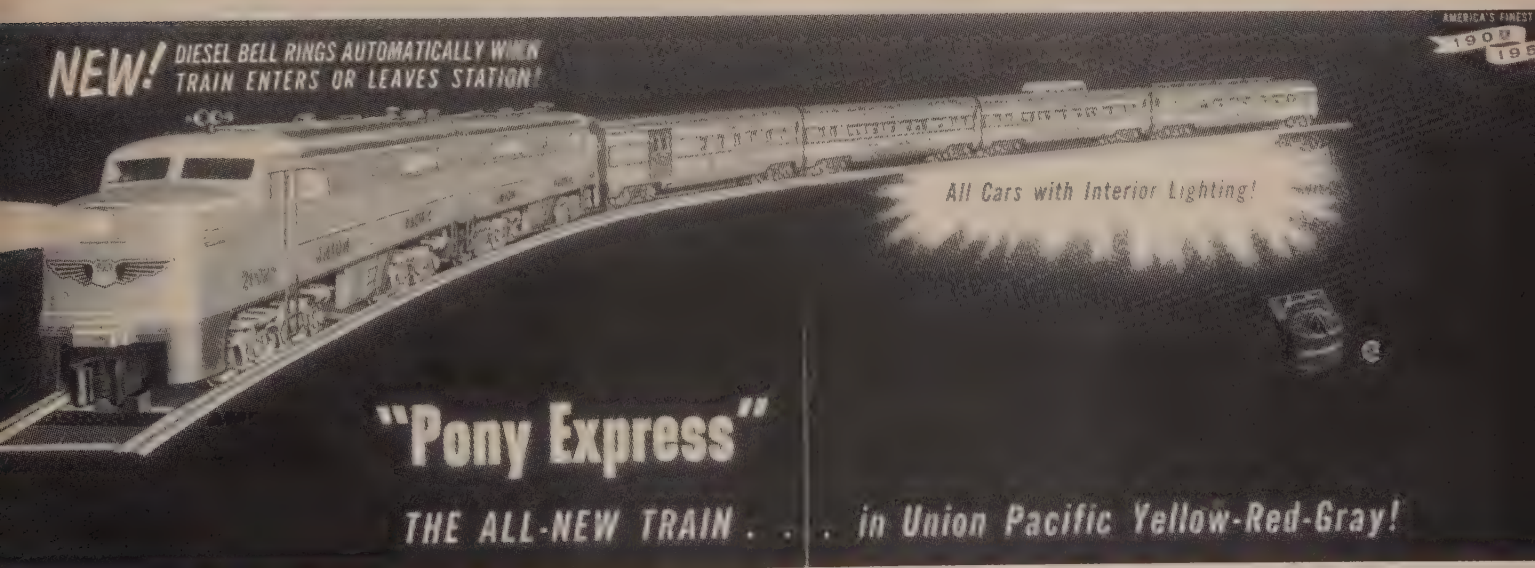
#### UNION PACIFIC SET

**Romer:** Those were all some that I actually picked, myself, and decided to put in the line, with the exception of Union Pacific. Here's the story on the Union Pacific set: The Union Pacific (Railroad company) came to me. I think it was at the Railroad Fair when I first talked to them. Anyhow, I got numerous letters from them. They wanted to have their colors and their name used on a passenger train. One day the man from their public relations department talked to me once again about the possi-

bility of a Union Pacific train. I said, "Listen, we just can't go putting a name on a train at somebody's request for the simple reason that this involves a lot of money for us. It means complete new masks for the train set, because in your colors you have the grey roof, yellow sides, and a fine red stripe." I went on, "that is stuff that requires very expensive masks, to do the paint job, and it means three or four different operations on each car, and each one of them has to be painted like four times. This becomes expensive." I said, "you have the stamps, the decals, and all of that"...so we dropped it. Then one day, (chuckles) much to my chagrin, I received a package, and it was a Union Pacific train. It was an American Flyer train painted in Union Pacific colors, and every bit of it was perfect. Union Pacific had gone out and bought one of the (American Flyer) passenger trains, a Santa Fe, I think it was. They had stripped it, and had had some department of theirs completely hand paint it and letter it. They really did a beautiful job—just to entice me to put it in the line. And, they made an offer that they would take care of all the expense, the mask, the stamps, and pay us for any paint that was involved, and everything else. And we put it in the line. I wish I had held on to that particular train.

**Nelson:** That is quite a story. Speaking of that, this would be an appropriate time to ask you about the road names that were used on various rolling stock and locomotives. You've already said you would just look at an item, you'd have women come down and see what they thought, and you'd have photographers take pictures of the actual thing and compare colors. Was there anything else in that regard that helped to determine which road names were used? For example, the Union Pacific name shows up a number of times. Any other criteria used in determining road names?

**Romer:** I remember well, being in Chicago, at Railroad Fair. In that same area, in one of the big buildings, they had the Railroad Fair, in which a lot of actual railroad prototypes were involved and represented. They had a particular meeting hall in which there were a half a dozen desks, and this was the headquarters for the eastern railroads. You had the public relations manager of each of these roads there at the show. I walked in and was look-



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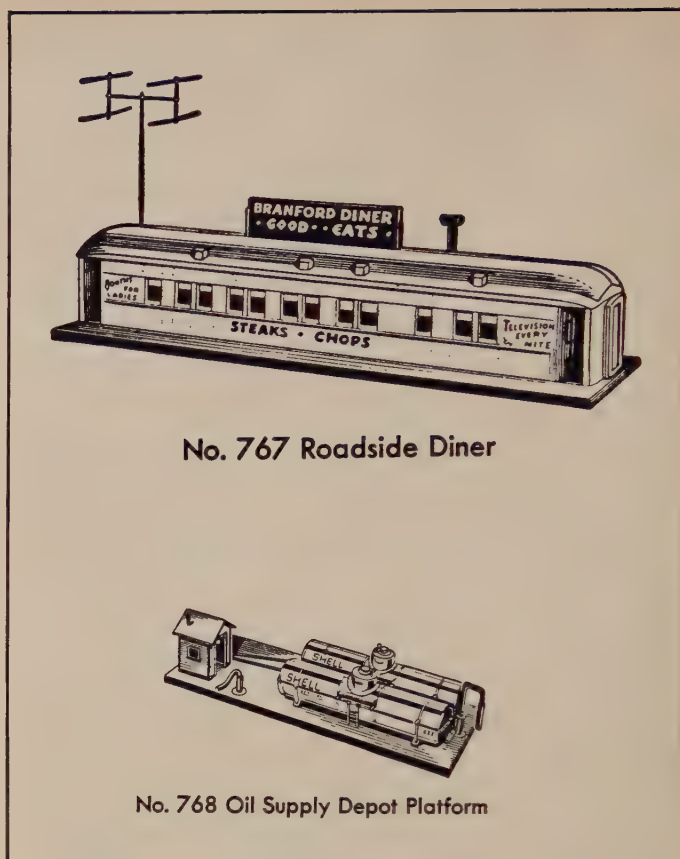
ing for Les Tyler from the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. As soon as my name was announced, it was just like the whole bunch converged on me. Each one of them wanted to know, "how in the devil do we get our name on your trains?" I sort of laughed and said, "What the heck does that mean to you fellas? These are kids' toys that I represent, while you guys are in real roads." And I remember very well Lawrence Sagle who was the public relations manager with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad responding to that. He said to me, "Maury, I want to tell you something. I thank you a lot for the use of the B&O name. You've used it on cars, you've used it on locomotives, you've made the old Royal Blue. But I'm still after you to get our name on merchandise, and I want it on the finest merchandise you've got." He continued, "I'm going to tell you something. That electric train that has the B&O's name on it is going to wind up at Christmas eve in the hands of some boy who's going to be real proud of this train. He runs this train as a youngster, and he continuously sees his pet train, and its got Baltimore and Ohio on it." And, he said, "every time that train goes around that track, it keeps imbedding that name in this kid's mind. Years later, let's say the boy is sitting behind a desk, maybe in some big plant, and a paper comes to him regarding the routing of a load of merchandise. Unconsciously he will say, 'ship to B&O'." And Sagle concluded, "we're not in business for two or three years, we're in business for a long time. We want our name instilled on every kid's mind. And we want it on his best toy." So you can see how railroads influenced us. And, every time there was something new put out by a railroad, I was sent plenty of pictures and information on it.

**Nelson:** That's fascinating. Would you say a good number of other railroads then felt that same way?

**Romer:** Oh yes, I heard from a number of different railroads. They'd keep me on their mailing lists. And, I want to add, many times I've called upon railroads for certain favors, and I've never been turned down.

**Nelson:** Did you personally have other ideas of trains that were either implemented, or were not put into production? Or would you say that the Game Train was the major one that comes to your mind that you thought of that was not used as you had planned?

**Romer:** Oh, no, there were a lot of things. When thinking of ideas of mine that were used, I think of 1950. That year we had a slogan, *50 new items for '50*. That phrase appeared in our catalog, and so forth. We also used the phrase, *50 years of progress*. So, according to Mr. Gilbert, we were going to have 50 new items for the train line. First we counted each train set as a new item. After all, there were differences maybe in composition or coloring or something. So, the train sets were all new and whatever number that was counted toward the 50. However, we had to put out a lot of other things, so I had to come up with a lot of new products. In such an instance, you just sit and scratch your head. Here was one idea for a new item that I came up with: I wanted more items in the line to build up layouts with, to get kids interested in building layouts, not just running a train around the floor. So, for instance, we brought out the Branford diner. (The next town from East Haven, east of us, is a town called Branford.) To make this diner, I took a coach body, put it on a base, a base that we had, cut the base down, and mounted the car body on the base, all with no tooling expense. We had it painted, made a diner out of it, put a sign on top of



No. 767 Roadside Diner

No. 768 Oil Supply Depot Platform

it, "Branford Diner," put a little TV antenna on it, and without expending 15¢ for tooling, we had a new item in the line. Similarly, I took a couple of tank cars, fixed them up on a base, and made that little tank unloading device.

**Nelson:** Oh, the Oil Supply Depot?

**Romer:** That's right. Again, those were from already existing merchandise. There was nothing new that went on it. There were two or three little pipes that were bent to act as though they were hoses. And, I put in snow, coal, grass, things like that. (chuckles) We did it, we made 50 new items in 1950, but scrounged. I was limited by the company in tooling expense. I had to make those 50 new items with practically no tools.

**Nelson:** That's interesting to hear. Changing the subject, I think American Flyer was so well known for their good quality trains; they held up so well and still do.

**Romer:** Yes, they held up pretty good.

#### PROBLEM AREAS

**Nelson:** Was there any particular problem, though, Maury, that you recall, with a particular train that didn't hold up so well?

**Romer:** Oh, yes, you know how the wheels on steam locomotives were made with that plastic insert between the rim and the center? Well, we got the wrong plastic in there one time. Some new plastic was developed and the plastic salesman came in and told us it was a better deal than what we were using, so we used it. But, we didn't realize, of course, that it would shrink. What happened was that the metal rim on the outside got loose and caused shorting. It cost us, we figured, something like \$175,000 to correct the problem. We had trains shipped all around the country in department stores, when we found out that this wheel problem was happening. We had to send crews out on the road along with their equipment such as drills, and pins and pegs, all that kind of stuff, and go out



and correct the wheels on the road. We'd have to go into a store and go to their warehouse, unpack all of their trains, fix the locomotive, test it, and put it back together. It was a big, big job. We had a number of crews out doing this job. The whole problem was just because of a switch in material in which we thought we were stepping in the right direction, but that of course, was not the case.

**Nelson:** It seems like, too, that quite a few people would send their trains right back to New Haven for repair.

**Romer:** Oh, yes, we had a large repair department. In the early fall, we started getting quite busy, and that would build up to Christmas time, when we would have quite a peak. Then after Christmas, it would rise again because we had to "eat" all our mistakes for the whole year. So it was a big job, yes.

**Nelson:** In addition to the wheels, is there anything else, Maury, that comes to mind that was a problem every now and then?

**Romer:** Oh, yes, those things came up right along. We had problems with the smoke. Some of the original mixtures didn't prove out right. Some of them would get sticky and things would gum up inside.

**Nelson:** When we last talked, I was interested to hear you say in regard to mistakes in the lettering on the locomotives, that with a metal, diecast boiler Gilbert would sometimes take the unit with the mistake down to a stripping tank, and then start over. Other times, I recall that you said they would just throw the shell away?

**Romer:** If they were plastic, they would throw them into a machine and grind them up and re-use the plastic.

**Nelson:** I see, but you would actually re-use that plastic? Melt it down, I suppose?

**Romer:** Yes, but with your metal you had to be very careful in melting it down. You had to watch again so that no dirt would get in. You couldn't throw painted items in very well. By re-heating, you took something out of the metal. I mean it deteriorated to a certain extent, and if it was to go through it all a couple of times, it left poor material. You'd like the zinc that you use for casting to actually be virgin zinc. And if you re-heat it and throw scrap in it, you cut down its life very much.

**Nelson:** In other words, if there was a mistake made in the lettering on a metal boiler, they wouldn't just strip it down and then re-paint it? You're saying they would melt it down?

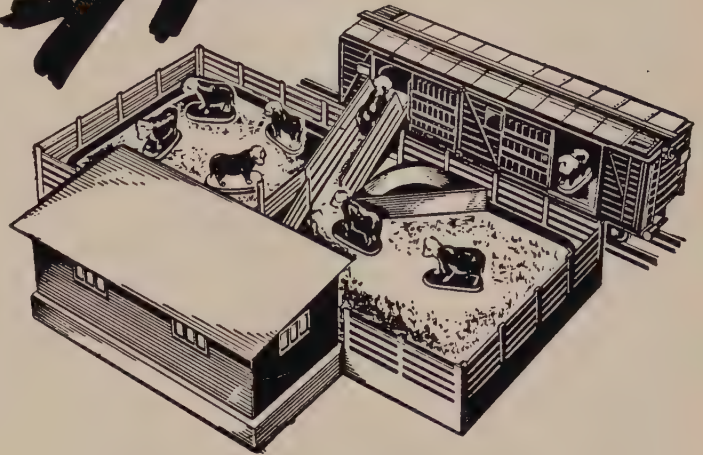
**Romer:** Oh, yes, lots of times, it would be melted.

**Nelson:** But would they occasionally just repaint it?

**Romer:** It depends. It depended on what the product was. For instance a lot of those metal cabs had little metal parts riveted onto them. It depended on how far along it was made as to what was done to it. Sometimes it was easier just to throw it aside and melt it; sometimes it was even better just to scrap it.

**Nelson:** That is interesting. Another subject, Maury: accessories. I remember reading in an interview where you said that you particularly enjoyed the oil drum loader, and I guess we all have our favorites. The sawmill and the coal loader are a couple of mine. Were there any accessories that were overall favorites, would you say? Any one of those accessories more popular than another? Or, in your own mind, other than the oil drum loader, did you have another favorite?

**Romer:** Well I liked the little cows loading into the car;



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I thought that was a good number. I liked the hand car. It was just a little "dingy" thing to run around the track, but I liked it. There were so many things.

**Nelson:** Yes, they really did have some nice accessories, alright, that's for sure. Were you involved in the planning of any of those, too?

### THE WINDMILL

**Romer:** Yes. Now you take, for instance, one thing that I wanted in the line that I just didn't get in was a windmill. I wanted one for along the right-of-way somewhere. I was a boy from a small town in Ohio, and as a youngster I climbed up many, many windmills all around the area. Every place had one.

**Nelson:** Did you envision it as being operating?

**Romer:** Yes, I had models made and all plans drawn up, but it just didn't fit in with the railroad as much as it should have. It had no railroad connotation about it. But it was just a piece of landscape that I liked personally.

**Nelson:** Sure. That reminds me that many or most of the accessories that Gilbert made were directly related to the railroad. However, an exception to that would be in



1952 and 1953 when they cataloged, though I understand they didn't build them themselves, all those wood buildings, like the Harbor Junction station.

**Romer:** Right, we had the wood buildings. Then, too, we had those plastic structures such as the oil well, and so forth.

**Nelson:** And Colber was the company that made those plastic towers, right?

**Romer:** Yes. That was a funny thing. We were in the process of designing a line of items like that. And that is where this windmill came in because that was part of the line of stuff that I was developing. And much to our surprise, these two fellows called on us, fellows that owned Colber. (Incidentally, they were two engineers from Lionel that went into business for themselves.) They were looking for an outlet for their merchandise. And, as mentioned, we were in the process of designing a line of towers. When we saw what it was going to cost us to make those, and here they already had them, we saw that it would be foolish for us to make our own, because we could buy them from Colber just as cheaply as we could build them. So we purchased the towers from them, although we had actually started work on the designing of them.

**Nelson:** Later on, they took on a different style, didn't they? They all went from a totally plastic construction, to a bit of metal on them, such as, say, the floodlight tower, or Gabe the Lamplighter.

**Romer:** Right.

**Nelson:** Now at that time, was Gilbert making those?

**Romer:** Gilbert made those, yes.

**Nelson:** Gabe the Lamplighter is one of the more unusual accessories. I presume the name Gabe comes from one of the fellows who worked at the Gilbert factory.

**Romer:** Yes, Gabe Monaco, who worked in the engineering department. He was one of the model makers. And he worked on Gabe the Lamplighter; he and the fellow he worked with. Together, I guess, we designed it, and then gave it to them to build a model. I think they originally built a breadboard model, and then we made some drawings and built it.

**Nelson:** What about those wood buildings? Were they made by...was it "True-Scale?"

**Romer:** No, I'm trying to think of the name. They were made up along the Hudson River in New York.

**Nelson:** Oh, Mini-Craft.

**Romer:** Mini-Craft, you're right, yes.

**Nelson:** Now Gilbert only carried those, or at least cataloged those for a couple of different years. One year, 1952, they had a few of them; the next year they had quite a few more, and then none. Do you recall the reason for that? Didn't they sell?

**Romer:** I seem to remember that something happened at the Mini-Craft factory. I might be completely wrong, but I think there was some catastrophe there, a fire or something. I'm not sure, but I just seem to recall that.

**Nelson:** As far as you know, then, they did sell okay?

**Romer:** Well, they didn't set anything on fire, but they did move, yes.

**Nelson:** Any of the accessories in particular that really did sell exceptionally well?

**Romer:** Well, the Talking Station was a good seller for us. Of course, that started back in the days before the war.

The barrel loader was good. The cattle loader was a good item. Most of them. That little sawmill was a good item.

#### UNCATALOGED SETS

**Nelson:** Another subject Maury. I know you mentioned there were many, many uncataloged sets. I have your manual here in front of me, *Train Compositions* which lists over 100 sets, most of which were uncataloged.\* What about all those uncataloged sets?

**Romer:** You see we wouldn't catalog a set or item if we made it for a certain specific store. Let's say Sears Roebuck. We wouldn't put it in our catalog because it was made directly for Sears.

**Nelson:** And would that be the same reason for some of the uncataloged car numbers?

**Romer:** Yes.

**Nelson:** How about, as you mentioned in a previous conversation, that towards the end Gilbert was putting together a large number of uncataloged sets. You said this was because of the surplus of certain cars, and so on.

**Romer:** Yes, they wanted to clean out what was there, so they put together many uncataloged sets.

**Nelson:** Would you say there were just as many uncataloged sets in the early '50's?

**Romer:** Well we always had catalog customers, for instance, Sears Roebuck. We wouldn't catalog an item made for them, but they would put it in their catalog. We didn't make it for anybody else. If it was #23456 or something, then that was their number. Sometimes we would actually include in the set something other companies would furnish us to include.

**Nelson:** For instance, would the Simmons mattress car be an example of that?

**Romer:** No, you see that was sold strictly as a sales promotion piece. Let's say you went in and bought a mattress, and the store had a program running whereby in buying a mattress you would get this train set which included the Simmons mattress car.

**Nelson:** Or, how about the White's box car, was that a similar arrangement?

**Romer:** The White's story involved Bill Perry, a long-time salesman for us, who had been the manager of the New York Hall of Science for many years. Bill wanted to get out on the road, and get back into really selling. He went out into the southwest part of the United States, territory that had fallen down quite a bit for us. Well, Bill did the job, actually picking up the area by "its bootstraps." White's, a chain in that part of the country, was one of the accounts that he opened up. He had trouble really doing anything until he suggested to the man at White's that he was dealing with, that they make a White's train set and put it out. So he made the deal.

**Nelson:** Any other cars that come to mind that were similar in nature? What about the Keystone Camera or G. Fox cars? Both of those seem to be extremely rare.

**Romer:** Yes, the G. Fox box car was a similar situation to the White's Car; Keystone Camera, too. From time to time we made samples of cars for different outfits, and sometimes the thing never went through. But G. Fox: I don't know how many were made; not very many. The story behind this car goes like this: Al Jay and myself went up to Hartford to meet with Mrs. Auerbach, the president of G. Fox. We met her and a toy buyer for lunch. She informed us about the anniversary that was coming up, and wanted to know what we could do for them. And I said,



"Why don't we make a G. Fox train?" And she asked, "What would that be?" I said, "We'd make a car with your own name on it. Make it up for you special." Oh, she thought this was great. The deal went through and how many they actually bought and used I don't know. But I know somebody who just recently went to a tag (garage) sale and found a complete train set with a G. Fox car in it, and the G. Fox whistling billboard.

**Nelson:** Is that a fact? I didn't realize there was a G. Fox whistling billboard, too.

**Romer:** It came with the train.

**Nelson:** You mean it had G. Fox right on the billboard?

**Romer:** Yes. I was to the S Gauge convention in Syracuse, and the fellow had it on display there. He found it in a tag sale near Rochester, I think.

**Nelson:** How about the Keystone Camera car. Anything that comes to mind there?

**Romer:** Nothing in particular, no. It was handled through one of the salesmen in our organization.

#### PENN. SALT TANK

**Nelson:** Though not quite as rare, another fairly uncommon car is the Penn. Salt Chemical Car. Anything that comes to your mind there?

**Romer:** Well I saw a picture, a colored picture of the actual Penn Salt car, I liked it, and that's how it got in the line. I liked the color of it, especially.

**Nelson:** What can you tell me about the Gilbert Chemical tank car. You'll recall #910, the car that was originally going to be a Celanese Chemical car, I guess. That's kind of an unusual car since it was cataloged separately, but never put in a set.

**Romer:** Well, I saw the actual Celanese Chemical car, and I liked it very much. I thought, "Gee, there's a good looking car." I got a photograph in color, from Celanese, and I obtained a layout of the lettering for it. I put it in the line as a Celanese car, and we started making them. At a meeting about that same time, we were looking over a number of items and somebody asked, "Why are we using that particular name?" and I said, "Well, we are using that name because that is the color of the actual car, the way the car is lettered." And they said, "What are they paying us?" I said, "Absolutely nothing." I continued, "I saw this car and I liked it very much and they furnished me with the material to make the car." "Ah," they said, "the heck with that. Let's put 'Gilbert Chemical,' our own name on there—the heck with this Celanese name." It went right through the meeting, and that was it.

**Nelson:** It seems like I remember reading that it was A.C. Gilbert himself that made the decision to change the name to Gilbert Chemical.

**Romer:** Well, I know that he was at the meeting at which the decision was made, but I think that the man that raised the question was Guy Schumacher. I think he was the one who said, "What are they paying us?" I am pretty sure that it was he who squelched the Celanese name.

**Nelson:** So, it was changed from what it might have been. I do recall a picture of the Celanese car itself. Apparently a few of them were made, or at least one of them, the one you had at the meeting, obviously.

#### TOY FAIR SETS

**Romer:** Oh, yes, they were made, as they were shown at the Toy Fair, and so forth. You see, every March is the Toy Fair in New York. You would send your new line of trains down there, and for about two weeks you've got all

the buyers in the United States coming in and looking over the merchandise and placing their orders. As soon as that is over, a number of jobbers around the country would have their own little toy show for people in their given territory. So when we made a line of merchandise, we always made initially roughly 27 sets. In other words, if we're going to make a particular new locomotive, we didn't make just two for the Toy Fair, we made at least 25 additional to go to the smaller jobber shows. So when an item showed in the line, such as the Rocket or Comet B units, which nobody can seem to find, they were shown at the Toy Fair in New York, and there were two there. Now besides those two, somewhere there were another 25 of them made at least. Now, when they decided to not continue an item, the couple that were there in New York went down the street to a place called Julie's Train Store. He would get all of that stuff and sell it. A lot of the fellows that have the real collectibles got them out of Julie's. Where the other 25 were, nobody knows. They may have been back at the plant and somebody took them apart. They may have gone down to our employee's store and sold there over the counter for 50¢ a piece or something. So many, many a good item went through the factory store.

**Nelson:** So apparently in the case of those Comet and Rocket B units, the production never got into full scale?

**Romer:** Yes. Before the Toy Fair ended, we knew we weren't going to use them.

**Nelson:** I see. But the catalog for that year was already printed?

**Romer:** The early catalog of the Toy Fair. There you would see it shown. Pick up the next catalog, and it's no longer there.

**Nelson:** And the Celanese Chemical, too, you would say there were at least the 25 for the jobbers, plus the two for the Toy Fair.

**Romer:** You would think so. It should be, according to the way things went. In that particular case, maybe something happened, and it didn't go, but generally there were at least the 27.

**Nelson:** When you mention production amounts, like the Rocket and Comet "B" units that never really got into production, how about some of the other items, Maury? I'm not speaking of very limited production items now, but rather a typical item, let's say a No. 293. Any rough idea of how many of those were produced in a given year?

**Romer:** No, I don't know, and I don't like to guess. There was a book available at the factory which listed all items and all production. I used to get letters from collectors wanting to know how many of a certain item had been made. I could go up to a girl by the name of Evelyn Lucky, and say, "Evelyn, how many of this or that item did we make?" She'd go over to the book and give me the figure right like that. I often thought if something ever happened to that book without me getting a hold of it, I would feel terrible. Well, I did get three books out of the plant that really came in very handy, but the production list I would also like to have obtained. But they were destroyed; they were burned.

**Nelson:** The three you mentioned then, are the one on uncataloged sets, and two others?

**Romer:** Yes, I unloaded a big truck full of garbage to get to these at the bottom of the truck.

**Nelson:** More generally, production-wise, would you say that there were more trains made from about 1946 un-



til 1953 or 1954? Some of these trains, like the Santa Fe's, or 290's or 302's, and some of the link coupler cars, are just really common.

**Romer:** Well, you've got to think about the fact that there were no trains produced for a number of years during the War time. So when '46 came along you had a lot of people who had been looking for trains for a while. (Yet we were strapped production-wise to get going so there weren't many made, say, the first two years until we really got rolling.) Then there are the economic patterns. That is, there are times when people buy a lot and times when they don't. Trains are a high ticket item, and the family that doesn't have money, doesn't have trains.

#### PRODUCTION FIGURES

**Nelson:** I'm still wondering about production figures. In my own mind, Maury, I have absolutely no idea at all. For example, let's say on a locomotive are we talking closer to 10,000 or 1,000 units or much more?

**Romer:** It all depends on what the item is. You take an item like a given box car or something like that, that would run into the 100,000's. But for certain items perhaps you'll find that it didn't move well, or something. Then, there weren't too many manufactured.

**Nelson:** How about some of the accessories? Do you suppose there would be quite a few made?

**Romer:** Again, there was big variation.

**Nelson:** So, you're talking anywhere from 10,000 on up to 100,000, or perhaps that's just too hard to guess on?

**Romer:** Well, you take most any given accessory—you could figure it would run well up into the thousands. A good many thousand. We certainly wouldn't tool up, set up a production line, and then run 250 pieces.

**Nelson:** Right. It wouldn't pay, I'm sure.

**Romer:** Oh no, you couldn't do it.

**Nelson:** In terms of sales, what about the packaging of trains? For instance, in the 60's—1964, 65—somewhere in there, they went to the see-through package. Were you involved in that change?

**Romer:** We experimented with packaging all the time. We had two major package companies here in New Haven, and we would call on their designers and their package engineers. Or, they would come in and want to know what they could do for us. I'd give them a half dozen train sets, and say "see what you can come up with in a good package." They did come up with some very good ideas on packaging.

**Nelson:** Another development in the early 60's was Pikemaster track.

**Romer:** Pikemaster? I had nothing to do with Pikemaster. I left engineering in 1958. In other words, I took charge of the engineering in 1945 and developed the S gauge line. I was in engineering from then until 1958. Since we worked ahead, I was responsible for a lot of the items in 1959, but after that, I got out, and I had nothing to do with Pikemaster. That came after that.

**Nelson:** In other words, shortly after you got out is about when it went, I would say, downhill, quite a bit.

**Romer:** (chuckles) I saw it coming. I requested to get out, and get into the Sales Department.

**Nelson:** With Pikemaster track, the biggest problem as I saw it, was the fact that the radius was too sharp to handle the 4-8-4's.

**Romer:** Right. Most all of our merchandise was really designed to go on a reasonable size table. Yet, you had a

minimum radius that you had to adhere to, otherwise you were in trouble. You take for instance, the Chesapeake and Ohio, GP-7; they had to cut all the steps away on it to make it operate. They ruined its looks.

**Nelson:** Yes, that was a shame. Apparently they didn't think about the fact that a 4-8-4 could not operate on it. Of course, they had dropped the 4-8-4 in 1960 so in that sense, they didn't need to worry about it. And yet I have talked to a number of operators that would like to use Pikemaster track, as it really looks quite good, but it just isn't practical, if they have any Northerns. Do you think they realized when they designed that sharp radius that the Northerns could not go around it?

**Romer:** They weren't worried, I don't think. They had only one thought in mind, and it was cost. The dollar bill. And they brought in a new chief engineer, a director of engineering, who was a specialist in cost reduction, and that was the result. That's when the Casey Jones line came out; one piece solid truck and coupler, and that Pikemaster track. It sort of, I'd say, spoiled everything.

**Nelson:** In many ways, you might say, the beginning of the end? That's my opinion anyway, because you could just see it going down, and it's no wonder that it was difficult to sell the number of trains that one needed to with that kind of poor quality and construction. Of course, there are many other factors involved, too. The Road Race set craze, for instance.

**Romer:** Sure. You've got television coming in and soaking up the kids' time; you have the automobile racing, and now you have all the electronic toys. I don't know what that's doing to it, but it certainly is affecting the toy market.

#### HALL OF SCIENCE

**Nelson:** That's for sure. Changing the subject, Maury, I'd like to ask about the Gilbert Hall of Science in New York City. I suppose you got down there from time to time, did you?

**Romer:** Well, at times I stayed there like a month at a time. During the Toy Fair, I always spent a month there.

**Nelson:** I've read different places about the large 80-foot layout, called the "Big Train Display" on the second floor of that building.

**Romer:** Yes, the second floor was our train showroom. In other words, each floor had a designated business, and trains were on the second floor.

**Nelson:** I remember seeing pictures every now and then of both the layouts on the ground floor which were open to the public I understand, and then this second floor layout, which, from what I've read, was not normally open to the public. It must have been just a tremendous display of trains.

**Romer:** It was open for the salesmen to take buyers through. When a toy buyer for, we'll say Marshall Field in Chicago, came to town, he was taken through that floor. It went through various changes from year to year. When I put the first exhibits in there, way back, each train was featured on a separate table. And, we had steps in which we showed the complete trains, and featured special features, such as smoke or a whistle. Then later on, we took them all out and put in one big complete layout. It went from one end of the place to the other.

**Nelson:** Did you ever have any direct contact with that layout? Did you ever work on that yourself?

**Romer:** Oh, I helped design it. But as far as running it was concerned, for a number of years we had a fellow



named Bob Schloss, whose father was a salesman for the company, who more or less took care of the layout. He was the handyman at the Hall of Science, a bright young fellow. He was the guy who did a lot of the changing from one thing to another on that layout.

**Nelson:** You mean as a new accessory, or something, was introduced, he'd put it on there?

**Romer:** That's right.

**Nelson:** Did he do a lot of the actual operating of the trains, too then, do you recall?

**Romer:** He generally did practically all of it. We had a number of trains running on there. Even though most of them were on independent tracks, they looked as though they were tied into each other.

**Nelson:** Speaking of layouts, too, do you recall in the 1958 and 1959 folders that on the back side to exhibit the accessories, they had a large layout drawn? Now do you know offhand was that strictly just an artist's conception of a layout?

**Romer:** Right now, you've got me. I couldn't say unless I saw it.

**Nelson:** Well, I don't ever remember seeing pictures that resembled that layout, and it did look like simply a drawing, or painting.

#### CATALOG PHOTOGRAPHY

**Romer:** Speaking of pictures, though, we had a photographer in New York who did most all of the photographic work for Gilbert, particularly in terms of putting out catalogs. He possibly did all the photography. I have been to his studio many times. At times, we concocted a fake layout, especially to demonstrate certain accessories, for example. Then we'd take a picture to show it. People from our advertising agency were there supervising the shots that were being taken, because they knew what they wanted in the catalog.

**Nelson:** Do you recall the name of that photographer?

**Romer:** I think the name was Durna. How he spelled it, I don't know.

**Nelson:** On another subject, did you ever have anything to do with advertising in any way?

**Romer:** No, with the exception of toward the end, I was made the sales promotion manager. But (chuckles) there was nothing to promote any more.

**Nelson:** Speaking of the different jobs that you had, because as you say that toward the end you switched to a different job, was there any particular job, of the various ones that you did for Gilbert, that you liked the best, that you favored over another?

**Romer:** No. Naturally I was interested in and liked the engineering department. I mean I had charge of train engineering. I enjoyed it. Then when I went into sales engineering, I enjoyed it. As far as the sales promotion, that was just something that was made up in a hurry.

**Nelson:** I see. Just a title, so to speak?

**Romer:** Yes.

**Nelson:** In the various jobs that you were in, you had contact with the public, and you had reactions, I'm sure, to the American Flyer line. Do you recall any particular reactions by the public, either positive or negative, or by retail store proprietors?

#### TRAIN 'EXPERTS'

**Romer:** Well, there came a time when prior to Christmas, I would leave New Haven, and go out around the country to various cities, and see how trains were ex-

hibited and how they were sold. And at certain times, I would get behind the counter and sell trains. No name on me to identify me, or anything like that; I would just get the public's reaction by selling trains. And one time I went to Macy's in New York, and there was a fellow there demonstrating trains. He had on himself a big round button or pin, and it said something about "an expert train advisor" or something to that effect. And, I noticed how people paid more attention to him than to anybody else. So, I had signs like that made for our demonstrators around the country, and I wore one, too. I would go, for instance, to Wannamaker's Store in Philadelphia, which is one of the nation's biggest stores. I would get behind the counter, and all I would do was sell trains. I wouldn't write up orders or anything, I'd turn that over to one of the girls. And we sold trains like crazy up there. Any other salesman there, the people wouldn't talk to. They came to the "expert"! They were aunts, or grandmothers, but they were buying trains from an expert!

**Nelson:** That was your way, then, of getting first-hand reactions?

**Romer:** Yes, first hand information—that's what I was looking for.

**Nelson:** And then you'd report back to the company, I suppose.

**Romer:** That's right. I would write a report afterwards. I began doing this occasional sales in various stores year after year. After a time, there were several stores that began to stipulate when they'd come in to the Toy Fair in March, that, "We'll place this order of trains providing we can have the service of Maury Romer for one week." They wanted me up there. This was requested by several different stores.

**Nelson:** Well that's quite a compliment.

**Romer:** The sales manager of the company would come to me and say, "Maury, we not only sold the trains, but we sold your services." It's what I wanted to do.

**Nelson:** Now were you still at engineering when you were doing that? Or was this after you'd gone to sales?

**Romer:** It happened originally when I was in engineering, before I went into sales engineering.

**Nelson:** You had the technique for meeting the public, apparently, and they liked what they heard from you.

**Romer:** Well, I got complaints from people, and I got suggestions from people. You get a lot of information that way. If I had been sitting in an office someplace, I certainly would not have found out what I was finding out there.

**Nelson:** Just one last question, and that is on the American Flyer Boys' Railroad Club. Did you ever have anything to do with that?

**Romer:** No, that was handled by our advertising. The whole thing was really handled by the agency. They had writers that wrote the show, planned the show; it was under their jurisdiction.

**Nelson:** I've seen three or four of these and I think they're fascinating.

**Romer:** There were six of them altogether. I recently found six of them. I sold them to a guy that's going to bring out duplicates.

**Nelson:** I greatly appreciate all of this. It has just been tremendous listening to this Maury. I have thoroughly enjoyed it! Thank you!

\*"Train Compositions" available from Maury Romer, 11 Deerfield St., East Haven, Conn., for \$17.50.



# Looking at Gilbert now

Peter Juggle interviews Maury Romer.



Maurice H. Romer was involved with the production of American Flyer trains for over 40 years. He was first with American Flyer in Chicago and then with A.C. Gilbert in New Haven, up until the end in 1967. This interview was conducted by phone on September 19, 1973.

**Juggle:** When did you start and where were you hired to do at American Flyer in Chicago?

**Romer:** I started in April, 1927. There was an ad in the paper looking for a punch press operator. A friend and I were going down. I had to ask him what a punch press was—I didn't know, but he said, "I'll show you. I'll coach you." We went down and by the time we got there, there was a string of people and the job was gone. My friend was going on someplace else, and I said I was going to talk to this guy to see if there was something else available. I talked to the man who did the little interview out in the small lobby, and he said, "Hey, by the way, I just happened to think...We need somebody in our display department. How easy are you with tools?" I said, "Good," and we went upstairs and I talked with Burgess Hines, the foreman, and I was hired and I started work.

They did a series of stock displays at that time which opened up to roughly a 4'x6' display or so on the front part. On the platform they had a wide gauge and a narrow gauge track to run standard and O gauge trains. They had racks with uprights with tracks so other trains could be shown. I got interested in the big scenic display they were building and moved on to it. That was the start.

**Q:** How long were you making the displays?

**A:** As soon as I started on big displays, they began sending me out on display work—installation displays and so forth. Then I went out for the company to make sure that in various cities, particularly in the Midwest, the merchandise was shown properly in the store, priced properly, and the artwork and banners and things like that that were supplied were used properly. I'd make a circle of towns like St. A.C. is fourth from left. Photo by C.R. Konkel





Louis, Kansas City, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Minneapolis and then Cincinnati, Dayton, Detroit. Then I'd report in and go out again. After the second year of that I came back and they put me in charge of the service department, and I became the service manager.

**Q:** How long were you service manager?

**A:** Well, I was still in charge of service and designing displays up until the time we moved out to New Haven. I was hired at New Haven to establish a service department and train the fellows who would repair the trains.

**Q:** How did you and the other employees feel about Gilbert buying American Flyer? There must have been a lot of scuttlebutt around the shop at the time.

**A:** Yes, there was a lot. I mean—a lot of people figured, "Look at me...This is the job I've had for a long time and now they're leaving..." And they didn't plan on going and they were wondering what the heck they were going to do. A lot of them wanted to know who the heck was the A.C. Gilbert Company. There was about 24 of us who came out here (New Haven), but many left after a short while.

**Q:** How did you feel about moving out to New Haven?

**A:** I wasn't planning on it until W.O. Coleman (the owner of American Flyer) got ahold of me. There was a change—Mr. Cuff, our vice president, was supposed to come out here with the company. He came out, and there was a disagreement after he arrived, and he decided not to take the job. He went back and Coleman talked to Guy Schumacher, the superintendent in Chicago, and he got ahold of me and we had a meeting there in a tavern near the other plant. He brought me across and asked me to set up the service department and to assist Schumacher in getting production started.

**Q:** Is it true that they kept the factory service station here in Chicago open for sometime after the move?

**A:** W.O. Coleman was going to keep offices at the plant and maintain a service department. There were two fellows who worked for me: one was

Tom Linder and the other was Casimir Hatz. They were going to stay on and be servicemen working for W.O. Coleman. So when they went to pack things up, I was instructed to separate all piece parts in the service department 60/40: 60 per cent were to go to Cincinnati and 40 per cent remain in Chicago. Then when Cuff came back, he changed that plan, and we were to send 40 per cent out and retain 60 per cent. They established a service center in Chicago and right after the move was made, Coleman died. The two fellows bought out the service station; I guess from the Coleman family—I don't know what the financial arrangements were. They operated under the name of Hatlin for a number of years and had a very lucrative service station going there.

**Q:** There was a service station or store across the street from the old American Flyer plant. Could that have been them?

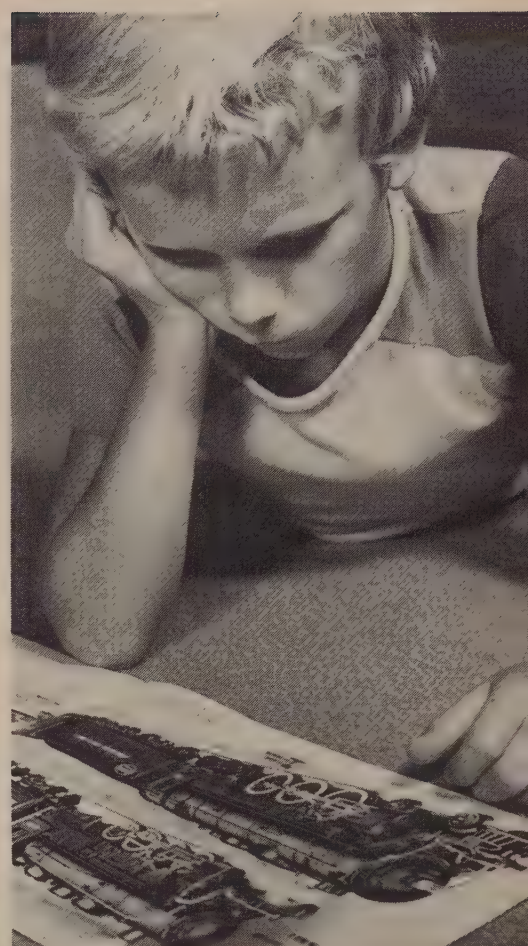
**A:** I don't know what happened. I visited them several times. They had a lot of the old Flyer stock. I do remember that a friend of mine stopped in there one day and was able to buy some of the "Mayflower" cars from them, and things like that, that they had on hand. There was a lot of stock that Coleman had put aside.

**Q:** Was Chicago Flyer working on the 3/16" trains before it was purchased by Gilbert or was that a Gilbert innovation?

**A:** We had a sales manager in the train division whose name was Phil Connell. Phil was one of the fellows who came out here, and he was very strong for S gauge. I can remember in Cleveland there was a hobby shop that was sponsoring S gauge (Cleveland Model Supply). He visited with them, and I think they sold him on the idea of the 3/16" scale, but working on O gauge track, before we left for New Haven.

**Q:** In a letter from W.O. Coleman to A. C. Gilbert, he makes mention of hope for success of the new small scale HO trains.

**A:** No! The A.C. Gilbert Co. was planning on bringing out HO. A.C. Gilbert and W.O. Coleman were good friends. They were the founders of the Toy Manufacturers Association. At a meeting of the Toy Manufacturers



The way to a boy's heart is enclosed in the dream-like atmosphere of a train catalog. *Tom Barker*

Association in 1937, A.C. Gilbert told W.O. Coleman: "Ogden, you're going to have a competitor in the train business. I'm thinking of going into HO gauge." Coleman said, "Why do you want to go into HO gauge? Why don't you take over American Flyer?" A.C. said, "I couldn't afford it." They got together on a deal where A.C. Gilbert Company paid nothing for it out of 12 years sales, by paying a percentage of each year's sales to American Flyer.

**Q:** What was your job when you first went to New Haven? You briefly mentioned setting up the service department.

**A:** I was to set up the service department. I had a few fellows there I was to train. I also brought along a few fellows from the Chicago service department. They knew more about it than I did, so they were working with these fellows and showing them what to do. So, I got to working with Schumacher setting up conveyor lines and breaking in girls for the work. We



hired all new people and almost all our girls were just out of school without any factory experience, and we had to break them in from scratch. We started them building cars and equipment and set up a locomotive line and so forth. Some merchandise was already made and shipped completed out here, but we had a lot to make and supervisors and line workers all had to be trained.

**Q:** Exactly when was that?

**A:** We got out here in April, 1938. Tools and dies and equipment had been shipped in January and February, and was already here when we arrived. It was a case of getting started right away. We had to produce the line and have things ready for the 1938 Christmas season.

**Q:** Your picture is shown many times in magazines as representing A.C.

Gilbert at toy shows and such. Was this part of your job?

**A:** Yes, usually every year for the month of March I lived in New York City. I would go down there and stay in a hotel and attend the Toy Fair every day. I would be in the office at the call of the members of the sales departments. For instance, if the buyer for a store such as Marshall Fields came in and said, "You know, I ran into some problems this year," they had me sit in and analyze the situation and find out what went wrong or what happened—trouble shooting, talking with all the buyers about any problems they had and things of that nature.

**Q:** You once mentioned that you wrote instructions and booklets and things like that. Was this part of your job?

**A:** All instructions, booklets and literature of any kind that was used by American Flyer was written by me. In 1938, 1939, and 1940 we produced trains. In 1941, the war came along and we stopped all train production. We had trains made that we could sell, but we were not allowed to produce. Therefore, I then went into war work. I had charge of an inspection department. I had about 125 girls who were 100 per cent inspectors of piece parts for machine guns, land mines, parts of all kinds. We made millions of firing devices for land mines and booby-traps. Some we designed for the government and some were manufactured to their design. I had charge of the production of all those parts. Then, before the war was finished—I had been going to school for drafting and engineering and things like that—I was called in and

**This is Maraldene, A.C. Gilbert's Tudor-style home in Hamden, Connecticut, on Ridge Road. Photo by C.R. Konkel.**





told I was being taken out of the inspection department and then I was going to be moved into the engineering department. I would then be in charge of all American Flyer engineering. We had a chief engineer and we had three divisions. We had a toy engineer, an electrical engineer in charge of the appliance line, and I was in charge of the train line. That is when it fell into my lap to start writing instruction sheets and assigning the numbers to all the items, developing new ideas, going out into the field and hunting for ideas, and meeting with inventors.

**Q:** I recently picked up a book by Lou Hertz and you were listed as a representative of the A.C. Gilbert Company. What part of your job was this?

**A:** I worked with Lou Hertz quite a lot. I was at his home looking over trains with him. He used to come to the plant quite often, and he eventually went to work at Polks in New York. I used to see him there quite often.

**Q:** What part did you play in the construction of some of the large window displays?

**A:** As I told you, my original start was with the display department. I continued to make displays until the day I left. I never left the display department. Every time a display was needed, it was mine to design. Even though I was in charge of train engineering, we made hundreds of big massive displays of all nature.

**Q:** In your recollection, which store had the largest display?

**A:** I wouldn't know, but I'll tell you one of the largest of the early displays was at the Boston store window at State and Madison in Chicago. There was a short circuit in the window display that was so full of toys that you couldn't move, and I had to saw the tracks apart section by section to try to find the short. It was impossible to remove anything from the window, and there was cotton in among the tracks. I wouldn't know how many thousands of people were looking in to see what that nut was doing sawing the track apart. The heat from the lights was terrible, but I eventually found it. Somebody had left a wire

from the outside rail and it touched the center rail.

**Q:** About how large were some of these displays?

**A:** They were in various sizes and shapes depending on the size of the windows they were going to go into. They could be 18 ft. long and 7 ft. wide.

**Q:** How well did you like W.O. Coleman?

**A:** I thought he was a very nice man. He had the wrong people in charge, and that is why things went downhill for him.

**Q:** How about A.C. Gilbert?

**A:** A wonderful man.

**Q:** How did the other workers like Gilbert?

**A:** I think everybody did. A very funny thing—over the years many, many unions tried to get in. They would be passing out literature...No union could get in the shop as long as A.C. was there. The people liked him too well. They wouldn't have anybody with them.

**Q:** Did you retire from Gilbert under normal circumstances?

**A:** I had two major coronaries. After the second coronary, I went back to work and sat at my desk half days. The end was there anyhow. You could see it coming. It was just a case of time.

**Q:** Was this in 1964 or 1965?

**A:** 1967.

**Q:** What is the story about A.F. Industries in 1967? Did you play any part in that?

**A:** I did to the extent that they brought me to New York and wanted me as their representative in the showroom of the Toy Fair, and I have my lapel button yet to show I was working for AF Industries.

**Q:** Who was behind AF Industries?

**A:** Harry Blum out of Cleveland was quite interested in it. I'm trying to remember the name of the man who was president. He was president problem you might say. It was Harry Blum who was basically behind it.

**Q:** What did you think was the best engineered piece of equipment manufactured by Gilbert in S gauge?

**A:** A fascinating thing, one of the things I liked better than anything else was the barrel loader. I got a big kick out of that. As far as rolling stock...I thought the diesel and streamline passenger cars were about as nice a rolling stock as I think was ever made.



Catalog shows two types of smokestacks on the freight and passenger Frontiersman sets.



Mrs. Charlotte Gilbert Chase, daughter of A.C. Gilbert.

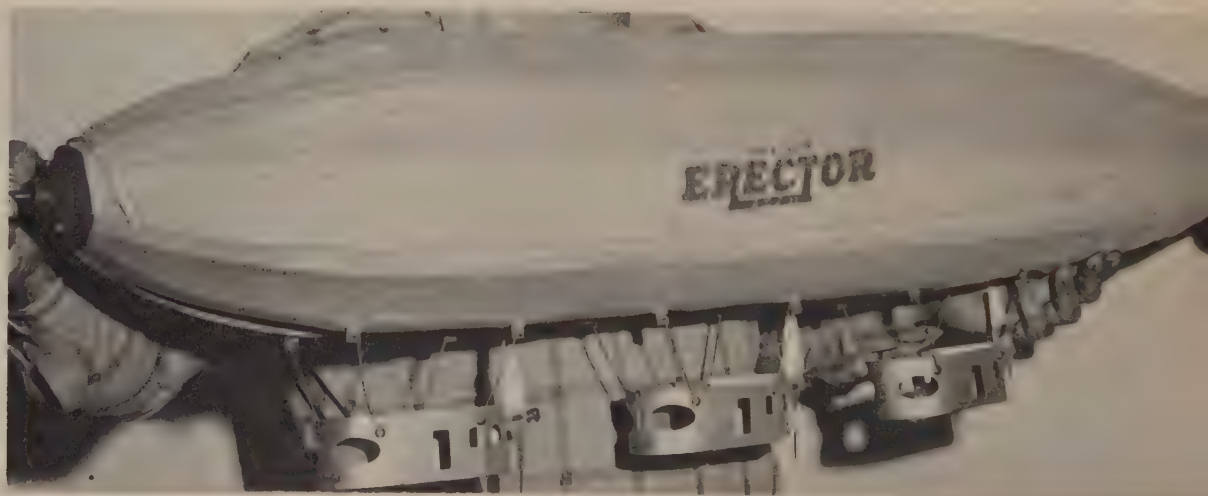


# Gilbert Gallery



The A.C. Gilbert employees have gathered around the famous Erector Tower in New Haven to get their picture taken in 1921. Even by 1921, Gilbert had quite a few employees working for him.

One of A.C. Gilbert's science toys was the Erector dirigible, a large and interesting addition to the educational toy line which was constantly expanding. Gilbert also produced the Erector Hudson and the Erector Trucks.

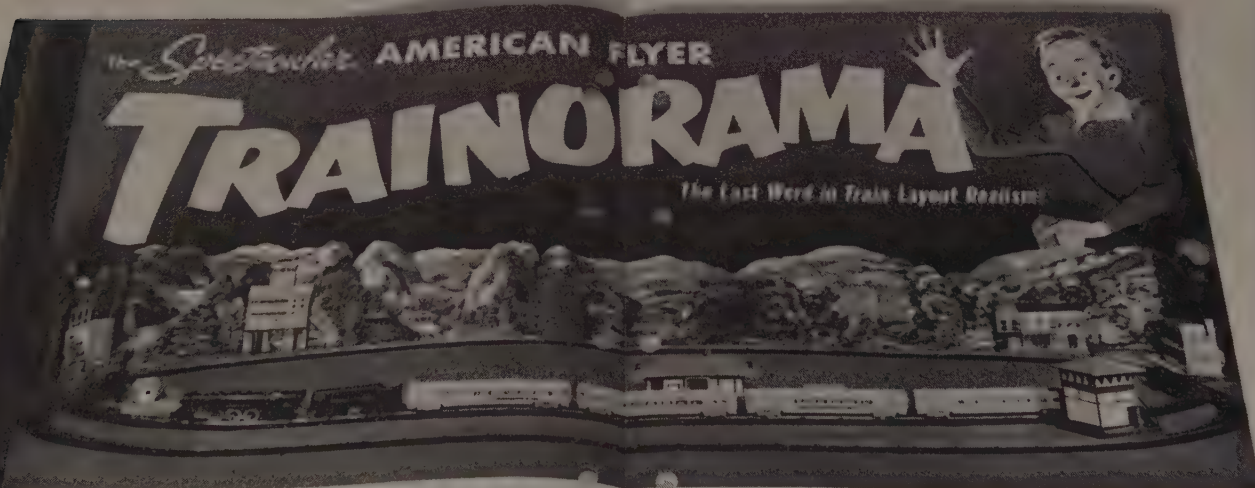
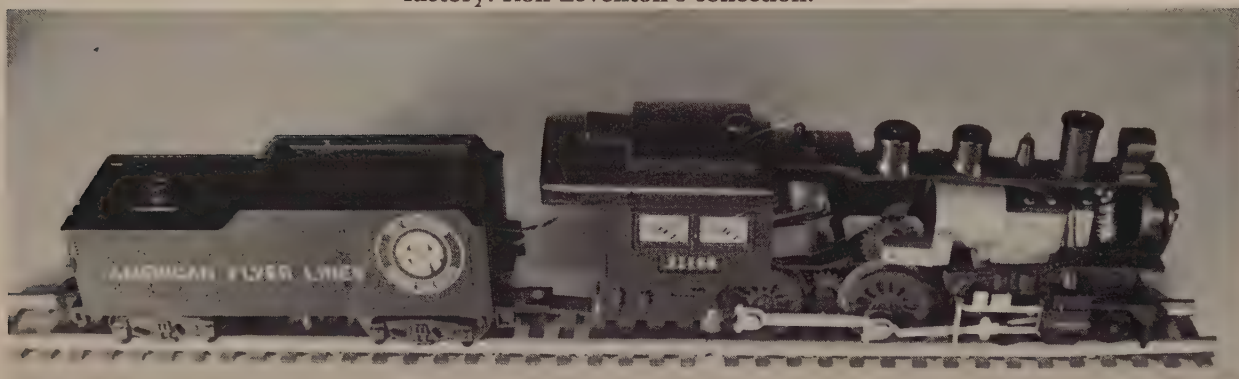




BELOW, MIDDLE. Between 1961 and 1963 Gilbert marketed the one piece plastic 4-4-0 with the number "21168" recessed under the cab window; it is the only Gilbert steam engine lettered for the Southern. Pete Jugle owns this factory cutaway version of the engine. BELOW, BOTTOM. The Trainorama appears to have been a wholesale house special set that is mostly found in the Midwest. Much of the diorama was in three dimension.



The 937 Katy in front has a white painted body with black lettering; the one behind it is standard yellow. The white car came from a hobby shop near the factory. Ron Leventon's collection.



The New **3 DIMENSIONAL**  
Scenic Background for ALL Model Railroads!

- ★ 9 FEET LONG WHEN USED AS ABOVE
- ★ CAN BE SET UP IN VARIETY OF WAYS (Turn Page)
- ★ PAINTED BY FOREMOST LANDSCAPE ARTIST
- ★ SCENERY TYPICAL OF EAST, MIDWEST, SOUTH, FAR WEST.

#### No. 791 AMERICAN FLYER SCENIC TRAINORAMA

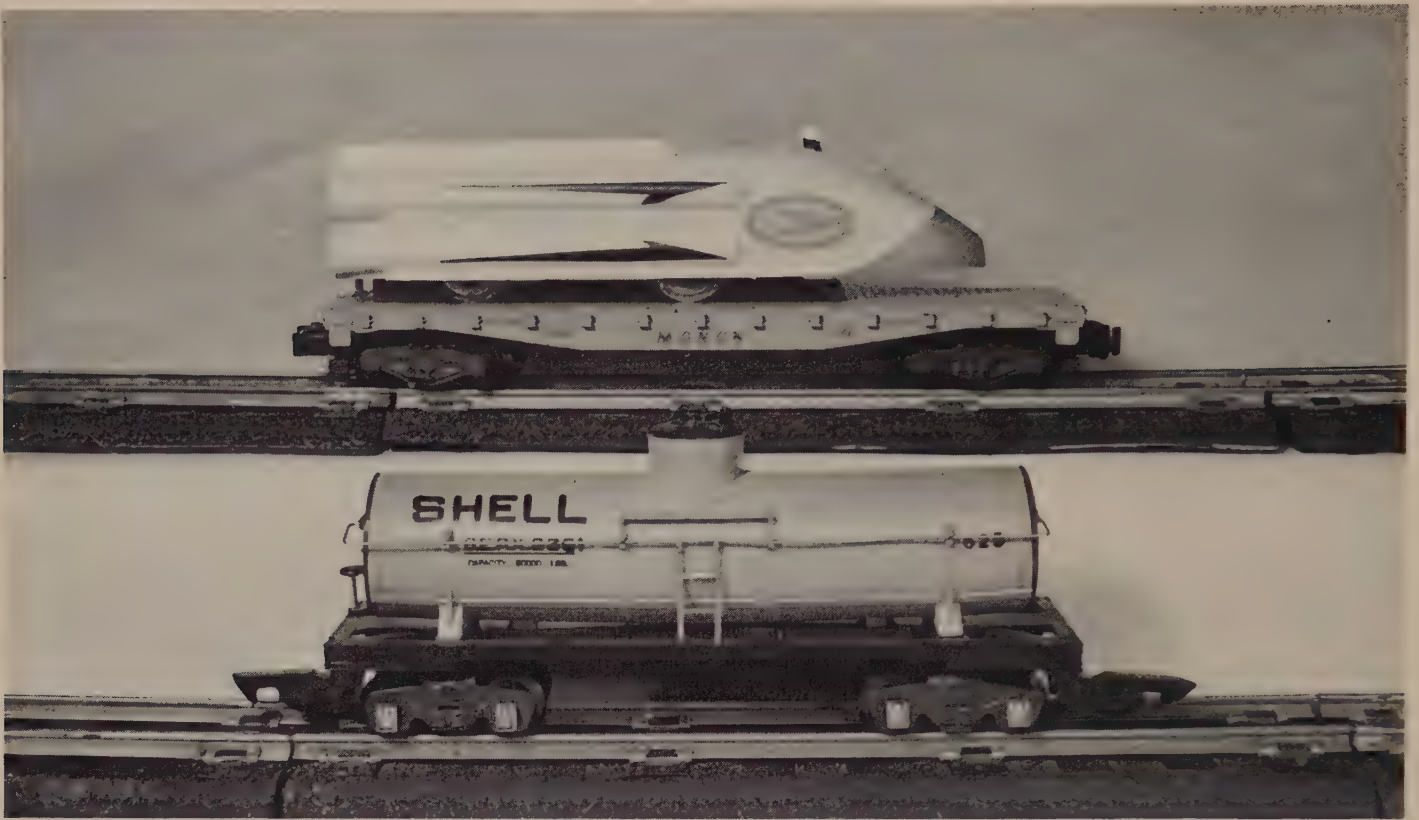
There's never been anything like it in the electric train industry! Now, in just a few seconds, you can turn a set of trains and a loop of track into a colorful, super-realistic model railroad - with the new American Flyer TRAINORAMA.

Even on a layout with no basic landscaping or texturing, as above, the TRAINORAMA creates a remarkably life-like setting. Much of it is in third dimension: trees, stores, factories, etc. Note on extreme left and extreme right how buildings

and landscape "stand out" in a separate plane, providing depth and realism.

The TRAINORAMA is made in five sections, which unfold and set up in literally just a few seconds. Dimensional features such as trees and structures are tabbed and lock into slots. Landscape cleverly designed to represent all sections of the United States: hills of New England, mountains of mid and far west, rolling terrain of the south, etc.





In 1960, one of the two motorized units was the rocket sled car which ejected a pilot. The Japanese motor runs on nine volts maximum. Ken Hein's version of this car is painted yellow on clear plastic; most are unpainted yellow plastic. The orange Shell tank car, owned by Ken Hein, is the orange painted version, unlike the orange plastic version. The frame is also plastic.

The very rare #24068 Planter's Peanut car is a white painted plastic Civil War style car made in 1961. Only several of the Planter's Peanut cars are known to exist. Jerry Sienkiewicz's collection.

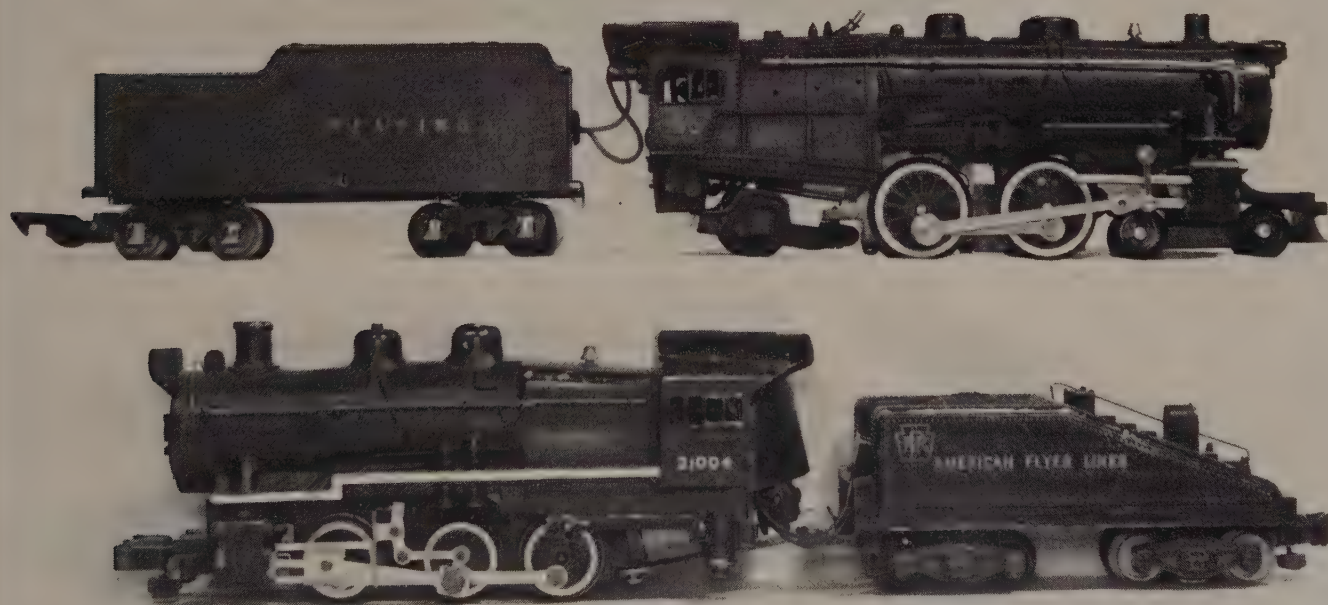






The #342 (top) and #312 (bottom), both made in 1948, are the first locomotives of their types with the engine-mounted smoke unit. Note the slots in the boilers (at front), cut there by the factory. Gary Baloun's collection.

This 1948 Reading 4-4-2 features one of the first pre-production smoke units; note slot in boiler. The 21004 is a pre-production engine with early production tender. Both locomotives are from Gary Baloun's collection.







Two mock-ups of low profile electric switches with built-in reverse loop contacts. The switches were never made. They are from Peter Jugle's collection.

The No. 471 B unit from the Santa Fe diesel A-B-A set of 1954 has an unusual number placement on the lower skirt. The Santa Fe 21720 is an uncataloged B unit with black roof and yellow band through the portholes and louvers. Both items from Ken Hein's collection.

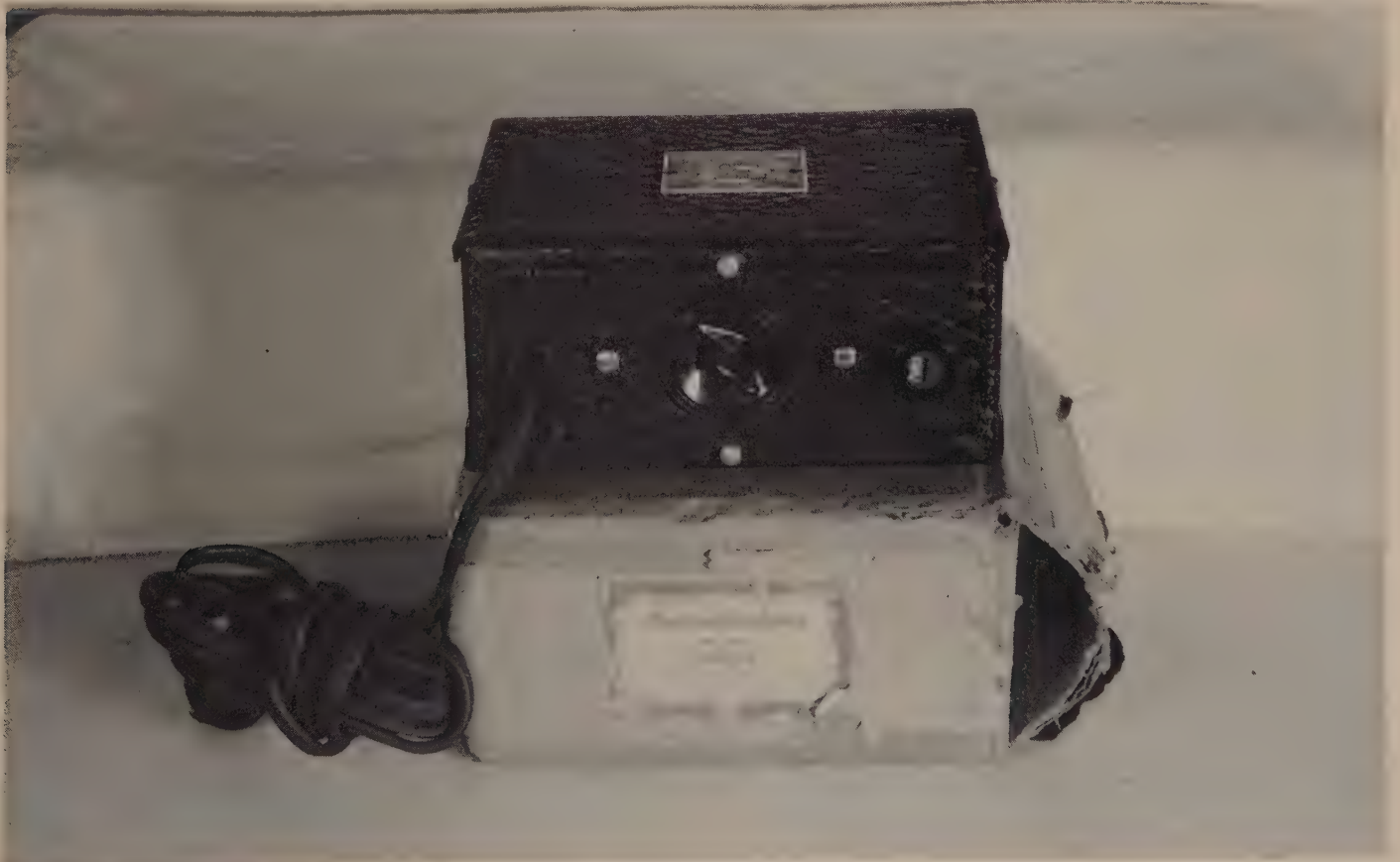




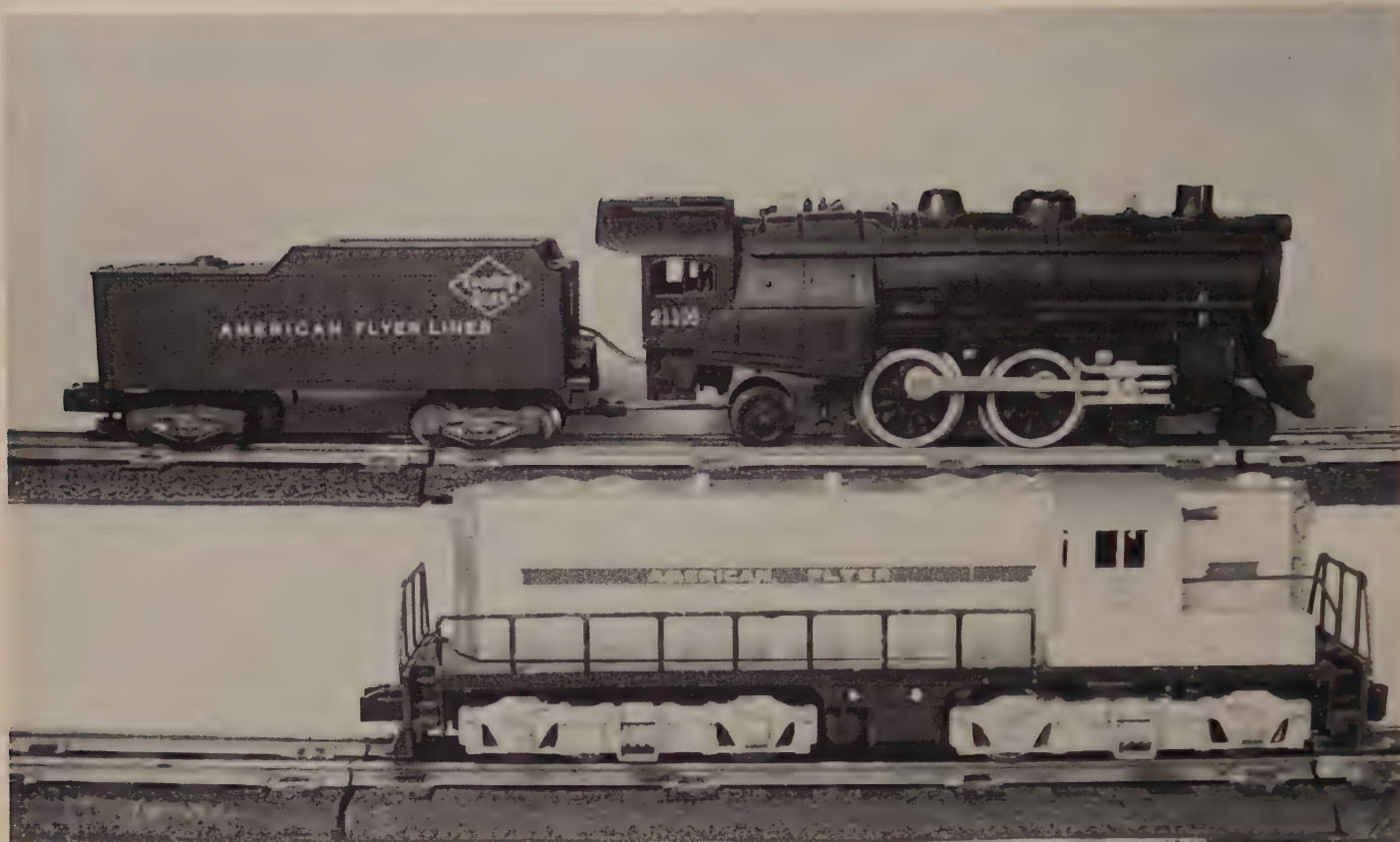


Gary Baloun's collection contains these mock-up models of the Alco PA and the EMD GP-7.

The #10 DC inverter was last cataloged in 1946. Dave Garrigues' collection.

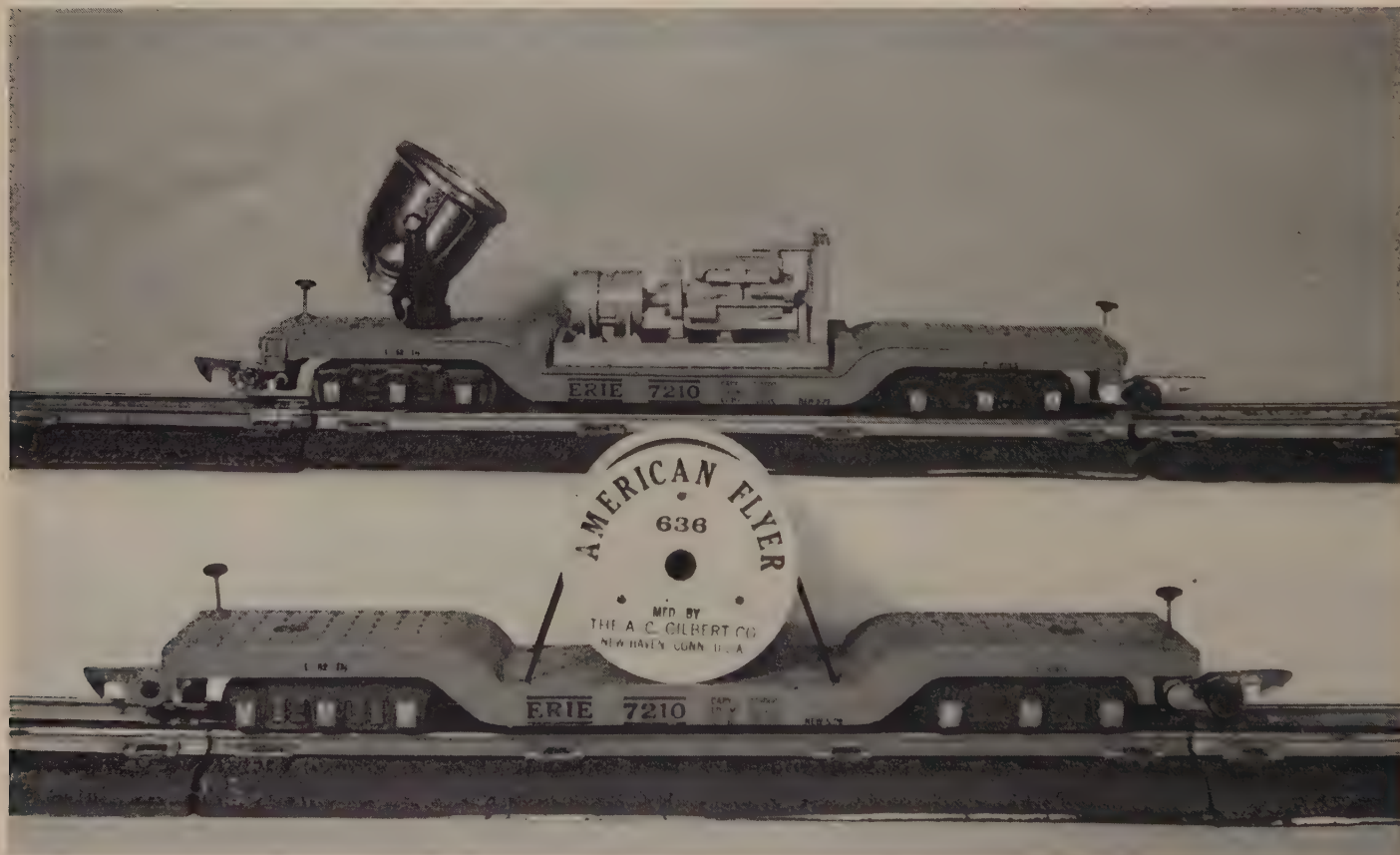




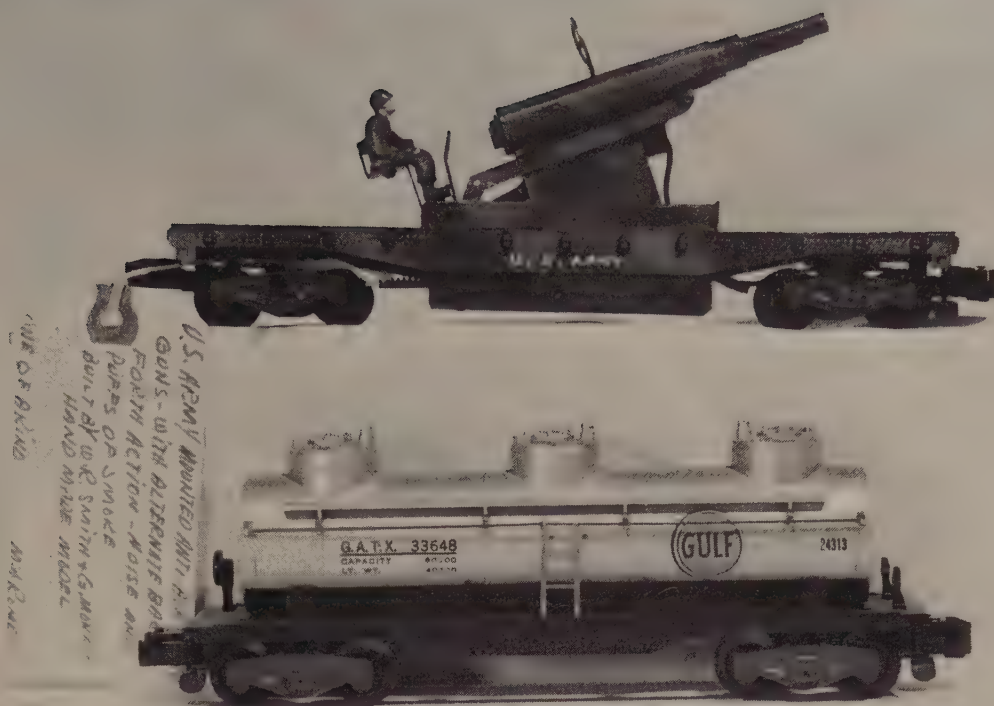


The 21105 4-4-2 locomotive with aluminum insert drivers is rare. The loco is Ken Hein's. The GP-7 No. 375 is a rare piece as well. Ken Hein collection.

This Erie (646) has a chrome searchlight and cast metal generator. The 636 Erie is a wood frame car. Both from Ken Hein collection.







The mock-up model for the never produced anti-aircraft gun with smoke featured cannons that moved in and out. The 24313 features a split tank—it's only one of two known to exist. Both models, Gary Baloun collection.

Seaboard and Rock Island mock-up models from Gary Baloun's collection. Note the smaller cab on the RI unit—it has a vertically-mounted motor.





# AMERICAN FLYER AND GILBERT TOY CATALOG

## PRICE LIST 1951

Because of conditions beyond our control, all prices shown herein are subject to change without notice. Colors, finishes, composition, etc., of all merchandise, cannot be guaranteed.

### THE A. C. GILBERT COMPANY

New Haven, Conn.

| No.                   | Page & Article             | Price<br>East of<br>Denver | Price<br>Denver<br>and West | No.     | Page & Article             | Price<br>East of<br>Denver | Price<br>Denver<br>and West |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| AMERICAN FLYER TRAINS |                            |                            |                             | PAGE 22 |                            |                            |                             |
| PAGES 6 & 7           |                            |                            |                             | 644     | Crane Car .....            | 9.75                       | 10.25                       |
| 590T                  | Freight Set .....          | \$19.95                    | \$20.95                     | 645A    | Boom Car .....             | 4.95                       | 5.20                        |
| 501T                  | Freight Set .....          | 23.95                      | 25.00                       | 646     | Flood Light Car .....      | 6.50                       | 6.85                        |
| 4904T                 | Freight Set .....          | 32.50                      | 33.50                       | 719     | Dump Car .....             | 8.75                       | 9.20                        |
| PAGES 8 & 9           |                            |                            |                             | 636     | Flat Car .....             | 4.50                       | 4.75                        |
| 5002T                 | Circus Train .....         | 32.95                      | 33.95                       | 716     | Coal Car .....             | 5.50                       | 5.75                        |
| 5004                  | Switcher Freight .....     | 37.95                      | 38.95                       | PAGE 23 |                            |                            |                             |
| 5114                  | Passenger Train .....      | 38.50                      | 39.95                       | 633R    | Box Car .....              | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |
| PAGES 10 & 11         |                            |                            |                             | 628     | Log Car .....              | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |
| 5103WT                | Passenger Set .....        | 42.50                      | 44.00                       | 630     | Caboose .....              | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |
| 5112T                 | Switcher Freight .....     | 45.00                      | 47.00                       | 632     | Hopper Car .....           | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |
| PAGES 12 & 13         |                            |                            |                             | 629     | Cattle Car .....           | 3.75                       | 3.95                        |
| 5106WT                | Freight Set .....          | 49.50                      | 51.50                       | 637     | Box Car .....              | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |
| 5110                  | Work Train .....           | 55.00                      | 57.00                       | 631     | Gondola Car .....          | 3.00                       | 3.15                        |
| PAGES 14 & 15         |                            |                            |                             | 625     | Tank Car .....             | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |
| 5107W                 | Diesel Freight .....       | 65.00                      | 67.00                       | PAGE 24 |                            |                            |                             |
| 5108W                 | Diesel Passenger .....     | 69.50                      | 71.50                       | 660     | Baggage and Club Car ..... | 7.50                       | 7.85                        |
| PAGES 16 & 17         |                            |                            |                             | 661     | Coach .....                | 7.50                       | 7.85                        |
| 312AC                 | Locomotive .....           | 30.00                      | 31.00                       | 650     | Coach .....                | 4.00                       | 4.20                        |
| 365                   | Diesel Locomotive .....    | 48.75                      | 49.75                       | 651     | Baggage Car .....          | 3.75                       | 3.95                        |
| 332AC                 | Locomotive .....           | 41.25                      | 42.00                       | 652     | Pullman Car .....          | 5.95                       | 6.25                        |
| 370                   | Diesel Switcher .....      | 32.50                      | 33.50                       | 653     | Baggage and Club Car ..... | 5.95                       | 6.25                        |
| PAGES 18 & 19         |                            |                            |                             | PAGE 25 |                            |                            |                             |
| 342AC                 | Steam Switcher .....       | 28.50                      | 29.50                       | 662     | Vista Dome Car .....       | 8.50                       | 8.95                        |
| 290                   | Locomotive .....           | 24.50                      | 25.50                       | 663     | Observation .....          | 8.50                       | 8.95                        |
| 322AC                 | Locomotive .....           | 35.50                      | 36.50                       | 654     | Observation .....          | 5.95                       | 6.25                        |
| PAGE 20               |                            |                            |                             | 649     | Circus Pullman .....       | 4.00                       | 4.20                        |
| 8B                    | Transformer .....          | 16.95                      | 17.80                       | 643     | Circus Flat Car .....      | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |
| 4B                    | Transformer .....          | 9.95                       | 10.45                       | PAGE 26 |                            |                            |                             |
| 2                     | Transformer .....          | 6.95                       | 7.30                        | 770     | Baggage Platform .....     | 7.50                       | 7.95                        |
| 12B                   | Transformer .....          | 32.50                      | 34.10                       | 771     | Stockyard and Car .....    | 14.95                      | 15.70                       |
| 15                    | Rectifier .....            | 14.95                      | 15.50                       | PAGE 27 |                            |                            |                             |
| PAGE 21               |                            |                            |                             | 774     | Floodlight Tower .....     | 5.00                       | 5.25                        |
| 715                   | Unloading Car .....        | 5.50                       | 5.75                        | 768     | Oil Supply Depot .....     | 4.75                       | 5.00                        |
| 714                   | Log Car .....              | 5.50                       | 5.75                        | 755A    | Talking Station .....      | 19.95                      | 20.95                       |
| 732                   | Baggage Car .....          | 8.50                       | 8.95                        | 598     | Record .....               | .85                        | .85                         |
| 718                   | Mail Car .....             | 6.50                       | 6.85                        | 773     | Oil Derrick .....          | 5.50                       | 5.75                        |
| 734                   | Box Car .....              | 8.25                       | 8.65                        | PAGE 28 |                            |                            |                             |
| PAGE 22               |                            |                            |                             | 751A    | Log Loader .....           | 19.95                      | 20.95                       |
| 644                   | Crane Car .....            | 9.75                       | 10.25                       | 752A    | Seaboard Coaler .....      | 20.95                      | 22.00                       |
| 645A                  | Boom Car .....             | 4.95                       | 5.20                        | 583A    | Crane .....                | 12.50                      | 12.95                       |
| 646                   | Flood Light Car .....      | 6.50                       | 6.85                        | PAGE 29 |                            |                            |                             |
| 719                   | Dump Car .....             | 8.75                       | 9.20                        | 772     | Water Tower .....          | 5.50                       | 5.75                        |
| 636                   | Flat Car .....             | 4.50                       | 4.75                        | 758A    | "Sam" Semaphore .....      | 8.95                       | 9.40                        |
| 716                   | Coal Car .....             | 5.50                       | 5.75                        | 566     | Whistling Billboard .....  | 6.95                       | 7.30                        |
| PAGE 23               |                            |                            |                             | 767     | Roadside Diner .....       | 5.50                       | 5.75                        |
| 633R                  | Box Car .....              | 3.50                       | 3.65                        | 593     | Signal Tower .....         | 5.95                       | 6.25                        |
| 628                   | Log Car .....              | 3.50                       | 3.65                        | 589     | Station .....              | 6.95                       | 7.30                        |
| 630                   | Caboose .....              | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 632                   | Hopper Car .....           | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 629                   | Cattle Car .....           | 3.75                       | 3.95                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 637                   | Box Car .....              | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 631                   | Gondola Car .....          | 3.00                       | 3.15                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 625                   | Tank Car .....             | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| PAGE 24               |                            |                            |                             |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 660                   | Baggage and Club Car ..... | 7.50                       | 7.85                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 661                   | Coach .....                | 7.50                       | 7.85                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 650                   | Coach .....                | 4.00                       | 4.20                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 651                   | Baggage Car .....          | 3.75                       | 3.95                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 652                   | Pullman Car .....          | 5.95                       | 6.25                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 653                   | Baggage and Club Car ..... | 5.95                       | 6.25                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| PAGE 25               |                            |                            |                             |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 662                   | Vista Dome Car .....       | 8.50                       | 8.95                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 663                   | Observation .....          | 8.50                       | 8.95                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 654                   | Observation .....          | 5.95                       | 6.25                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 649                   | Circus Pullman .....       | 4.00                       | 4.20                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 643                   | Circus Flat Car .....      | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| PAGE 26               |                            |                            |                             |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 770                   | Baggage Platform .....     | 7.50                       | 7.95                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 771                   | Stockyard and Car .....    | 14.95                      | 15.70                       |         |                            |                            |                             |
| PAGE 27               |                            |                            |                             |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 774                   | Floodlight Tower .....     | 5.00                       | 5.25                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 768                   | Oil Supply Depot .....     | 4.75                       | 5.00                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 755A                  | Talking Station .....      | 19.95                      | 20.95                       |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 598                   | Record .....               | .85                        | .85                         |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 773                   | Oil Derrick .....          | 5.50                       | 5.75                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| PAGE 28               |                            |                            |                             |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 751A                  | Log Loader .....           | 19.95                      | 20.95                       |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 752A                  | Seaboard Coaler .....      | 20.95                      | 22.00                       |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 583A                  | Crane .....                | 12.50                      | 12.95                       |         |                            |                            |                             |
| PAGE 29               |                            |                            |                             |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 772                   | Water Tower .....          | 5.50                       | 5.75                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 758A                  | "Sam" Semaphore .....      | 8.95                       | 9.40                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 566                   | Whistling Billboard .....  | 6.95                       | 7.30                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 767                   | Roadside Diner .....       | 5.50                       | 5.75                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 593                   | Signal Tower .....         | 5.95                       | 6.25                        |         |                            |                            |                             |
| 589                   | Station .....              | 6.95                       | 7.30                        |         |                            |                            |                             |



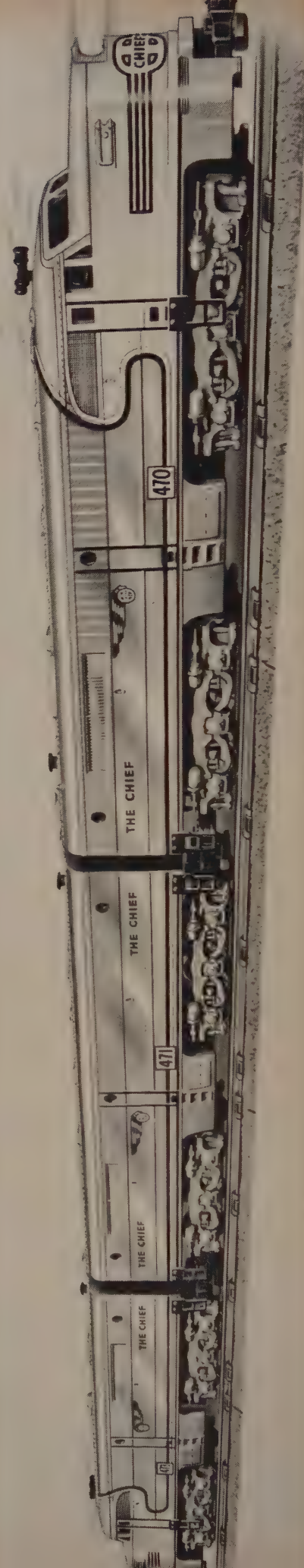
| No.     | Page & Article            | Price<br>East of<br>Denver | Price<br>Denver<br>and West | No.           | Page & Article                | Price<br>East of<br>Denver | Price<br>Denver<br>and West |
|---------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| PAGE 30 |                           |                            |                             | GILBERT TOYS  |                               |                            |                             |
| 769A    | Beacon .....              | 3.50                       | 3.65                        | PAGE 37       |                               |                            |                             |
| 761     | Semaphore .....           | 6.50                       | 6.85                        | 1½            | Erector .....                 | 2.00                       | 2.10                        |
| 612     | Station .....             | 7.95                       | 8.35                        | 2½            | Erector .....                 | 3.50                       | 3.65                        |
| 33      | Figure Set .....          | 2.50                       | 2.60                        | 4½            | Erector .....                 | 7.95                       | 8.35                        |
| 592A    | Crossing Gate .....       | 7.95                       | 8.35                        | PAGE 38       |                               |                            |                             |
| 586F    | Station .....             | 4.50                       | 4.75                        | 6½            | Erector .....                 | 12.95                      | 13.60                       |
| PAGE 31 |                           |                            |                             | 7½            | Erector .....                 | 16.95                      | 17.75                       |
| 249     | Tunnel .....              | 3.50                       | 3.65                        | 8½            | Erector .....                 | 22.50                      | 23.50                       |
| 32A     | Park Set .....            | 2.00                       | 2.00                        | PAGE 39       |                               |                            |                             |
| 578     | Figure Set .....          | 2.95                       | 3.10                        | 10½           | Erector .....                 | 35.00                      | 36.00                       |
| 748     | Foot Bridge .....         | 2.50                       | 2.60                        | 5             | Illumination Kit .....        | 2.95                       | 3.10                        |
| 760     | Highway Flasher .....     | 2.95                       | 3.10                        | 6             | Whistle Kit .....             | 6.95                       | 7.30                        |
| 596     | Water Tank .....          | 5.95                       | 6.25                        | 7             | Smoke and Choo-Choo Kit ..... | 7.95                       | 8.35                        |
| PAGE 32 |                           |                            |                             | PAGE 40       |                               |                            |                             |
| 754     | Trestle Bridge .....      | 4.95                       | 5.20                        | 2             | Junior Erector .....          | 1.95                       | 2.00                        |
| 585     | Tool Shed .....           | 2.95                       | 3.10                        | 4             | Junior Erector .....          | 3.95                       | 4.15                        |
| 581     | Girder Bridge .....       | 2.50                       | 2.65                        | 10            | Junior Erector .....          | 8.95                       | 9.40                        |
| 764     | Express Office .....      | 3.50                       | 3.65                        | PAGE 41       |                               |                            |                             |
| 35      | Brakeman .....            | 2.00                       | 2.00                        | 5             | Microscope Set .....          | 4.25                       | 4.45                        |
| 749     | Boulevard Lamp Set .....  | 2.75                       | 2.90                        | 8             | Microscope Set .....          | 8.75                       | 9.15                        |
| PAGE 33 |                           |                            |                             | 20            | Microscope Set .....          | 18.95                      | 19.85                       |
| 21A     | Grass .....               | .50                        | .50                         | PAGES 42 & 43 |                               |                            |                             |
| 22      | Gravel .....              | .30                        | .30                         | U-238         | Atomic Energy Lab .....       | 49.50                      | 51.00                       |
| 23      | Coal .....                | .40                        | .40                         | U-239         | Geiger Counter .....          | 19.95                      | 21.00                       |
| 28A     | Ballast .....             | .50                        | .50                         | PAGE 44       |                               |                            |                             |
| 29A     | Snow .....                | .50                        | .50                         | 1             | Chemistry Set .....           | 2.25                       | 2.35                        |
| 30A     | Highway Signs .....       | 2.00                       | 2.00                        | 3             | Chemistry Set .....           | 4.50                       | 4.75                        |
| 31A     | Marker Set .....          | 2.00                       | 2.00                        | PAGE 45       |                               |                            |                             |
| 24      | Rainbow Wire .....        | 2.75                       | 2.90                        | 7             | Chemistry Set .....           | 9.95                       | 10.45                       |
| 460     | Lamp Kit .....            | 13.50                      | 14.00                       | 11            | Chemistry Set .....           | 21.50                      | 22.50                       |
| 25      | Smoke Cartridges .....    | 1.25                       | 1.25                        | PAGE 46       |                               |                            |                             |
| PAGE 34 |                           |                            |                             | 9             | Tool Chest .....              | 8.95                       | 9.45                        |
| 725     | Crossing .....            | 2.50                       | 2.60                        | 14            | Tool Chest .....              | 12.95                      | 13.60                       |
| 694     | Couplers .....            | 1.00                       | 1.00                        | 16            | Tool Chest .....              | 16.95                      | 17.80                       |
| 709     | Lock-out Eliminator ..... | 1.50                       | 1.50                        | PAGE 47       |                               |                            |                             |
| 720A    | Switches .....            | 15.95                      | 16.75                       | 3             | Tool Chest .....              | 3.50                       | 3.70                        |
| 690     | Terminal .....            | .20                        | .20                         | 5             | Tool Chest .....              | 4.95                       | 5.20                        |
| 730     | Bumper .....              | 1.25                       | 1.25                        | 1032          | Puzzle Set .....              | 2.00                       | 2.10                        |
| 700     | Straight Track .....      | .25                        | .25                         | 1033          | Puzzle Set .....              | 3.95                       | 4.15                        |
| 702     | Curved Track .....        | .25                        | .25                         | 1034          | Puzzle Set .....              | 2.50                       | 2.60                        |
| 701     | Straight Half Sec. ....   | .25                        | .25                         | PAGE 48       |                               |                            |                             |
| 703     | Curved Half Sec. ....     | .25                        | .25                         | 1½            | Magic Set .....               | 2.50                       | 2.60                        |
| 706     | Uncoupler .....           | 2.50                       | 2.60                        | 2½            | Magic Set .....               | 3.95                       | 4.15                        |
| 722     | Switches .....            | 8.95                       | 9.40                        | 5A            | Magic Set .....               | 9.95                       | 10.45                       |
| 726     | Roadbed, Straight .....   | .50                        | .50                         | 25            | Magic Set .....               | 25.00                      | 26.50                       |
| 727     | Roadbed, Curved .....     | .50                        | .50                         |               |                               |                            |                             |
| 691     | Steel Pins .....          | .15                        | .15                         |               |                               |                            |                             |
| 692     | Fiber Pins .....          | .15                        | .15                         |               |                               |                            |                             |
| 693     | Track Locks .....         | .30                        | .30                         |               |                               |                            |                             |
| 697     | Track Trip .....          | 1.50                       | 1.50                        |               |                               |                            |                             |

BULBS: 440, 441, 443, 444 and 455: 75c ea. 451: 35c. 452: 65c.  
453: 85c. 461: 25c.

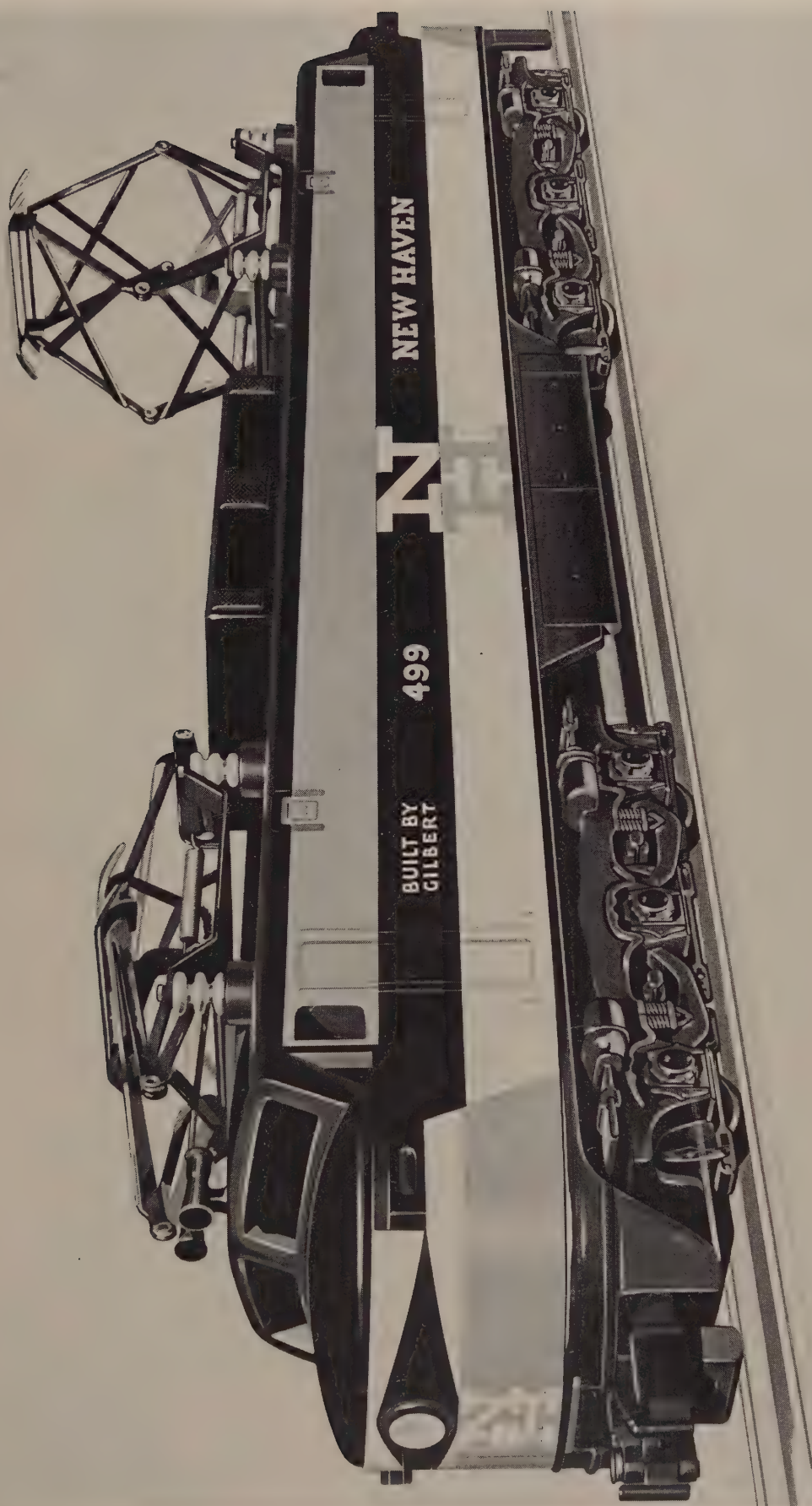


# Gilbert advertising artwork

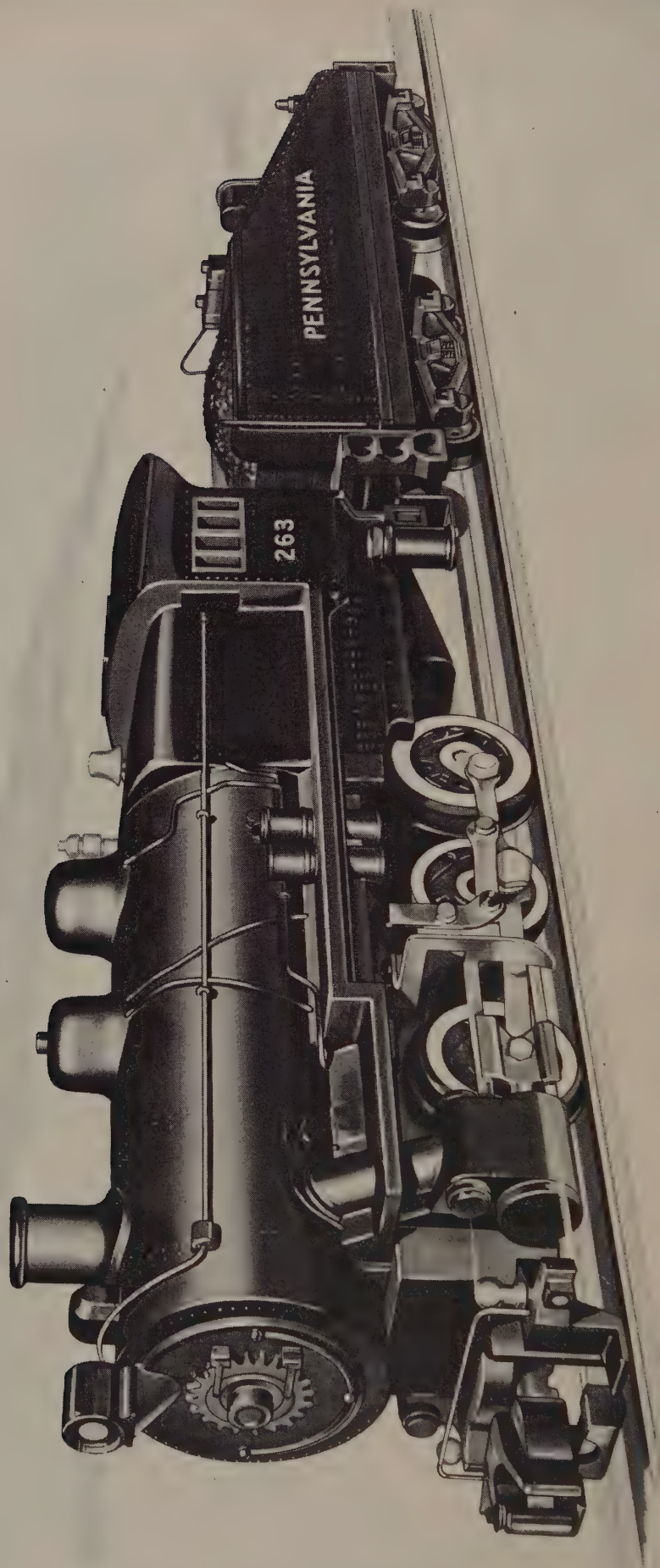
Locomotive illustrations used in promotional pieces,  
and by dealers for their own advertising.



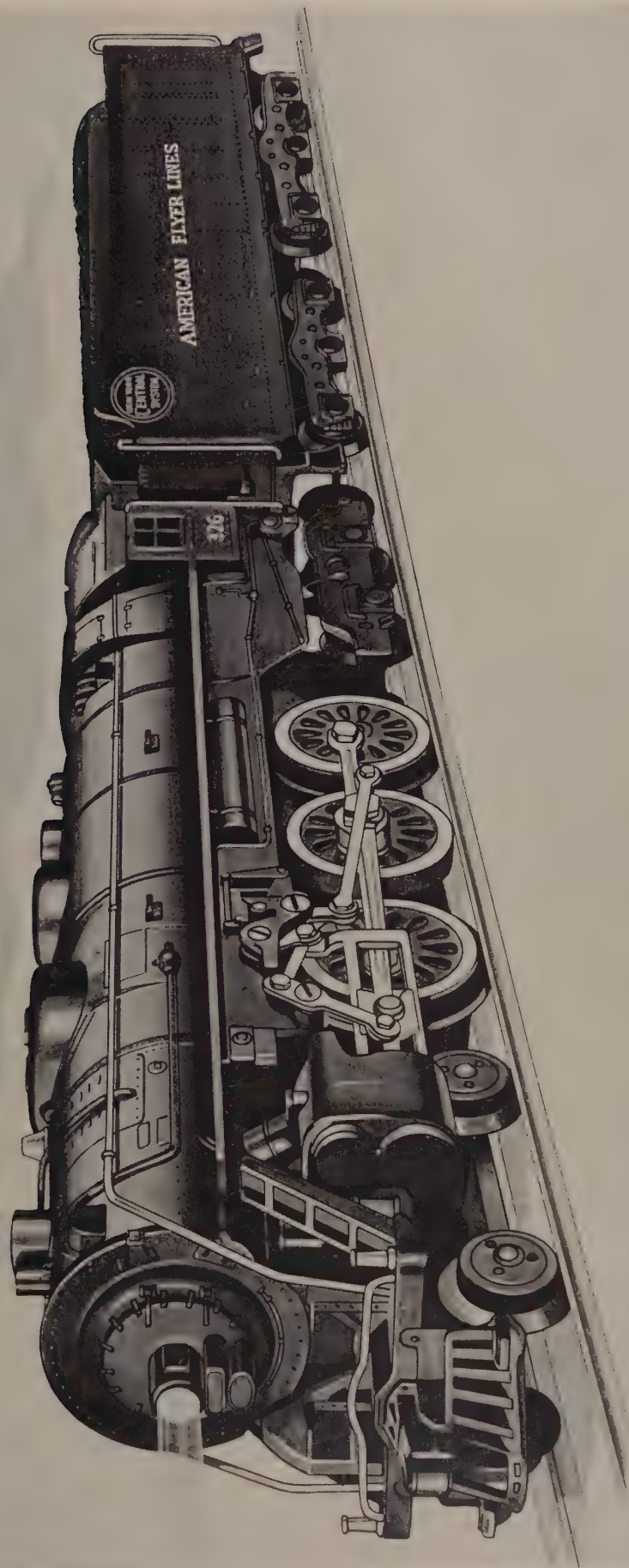




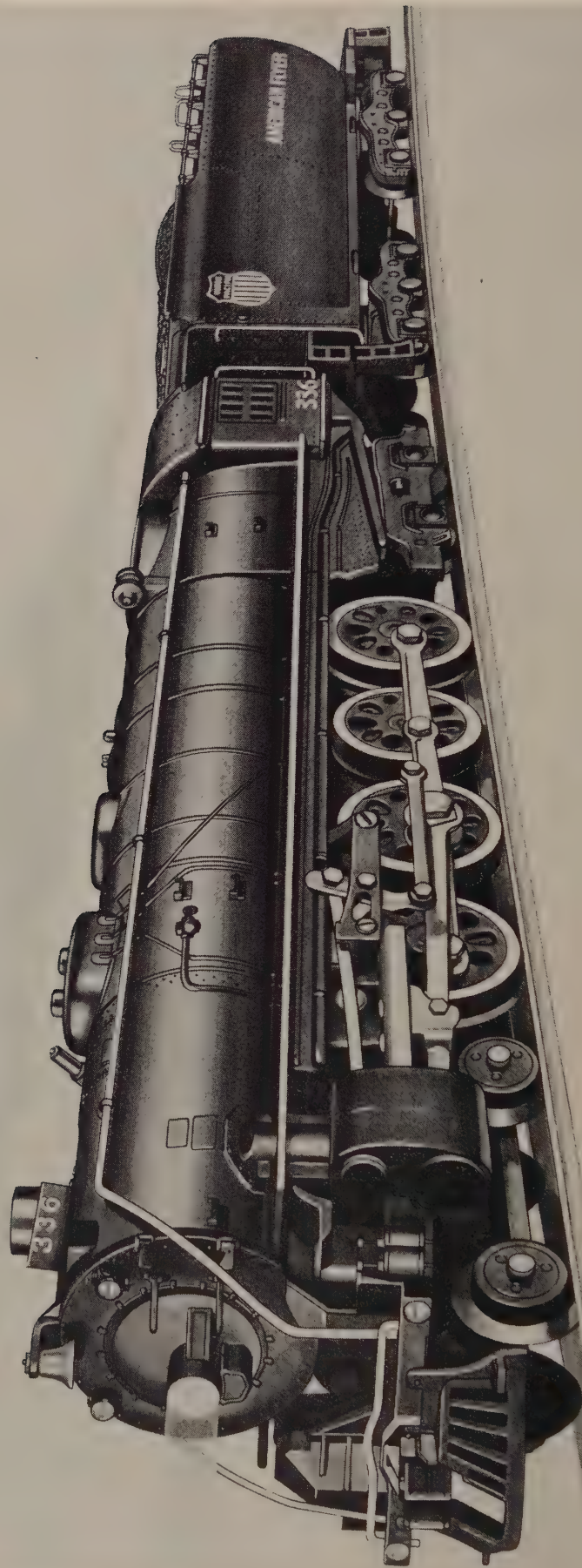














# Chicago Gilbert Hall of Science



The Chicago Gilbert Hall of Science, located at 512 S. Michigan Ave. (Congress Hotel), opened Saturday, October 17, 1953, with A.C. Gilbert Jr. officiating the day before at a special grand opening ceremony. Chairs were set up on the sidewalk facing Michigan Avenue for the event, which was attended by A.C. Gilbert officials such as Herman Trisch, vice president and sales manager who carried the New York Gilbert Hall of Science to completion, and Bill Perry, manager of the New York Gilbert Hall of Science. Along with opening ceremonies by the officials, was a luncheon sponsored by the A.C. Gilbert Company. The Halls of Science by Gilbert were located in New York (Fifth Avenue at 25th Street); Chicago; Washington D.C. (1610 K. Street N.W.); and Miami (300 East Flagler Street). The halls featured exhibits of the products of the company, including American Flyer trains and Erector, as well as the science sets. The export division of the company was also located in the New York Gilbert Hall of Science. The factory and sales offices of the company were located at Erector Square in New Haven, Connecticut.

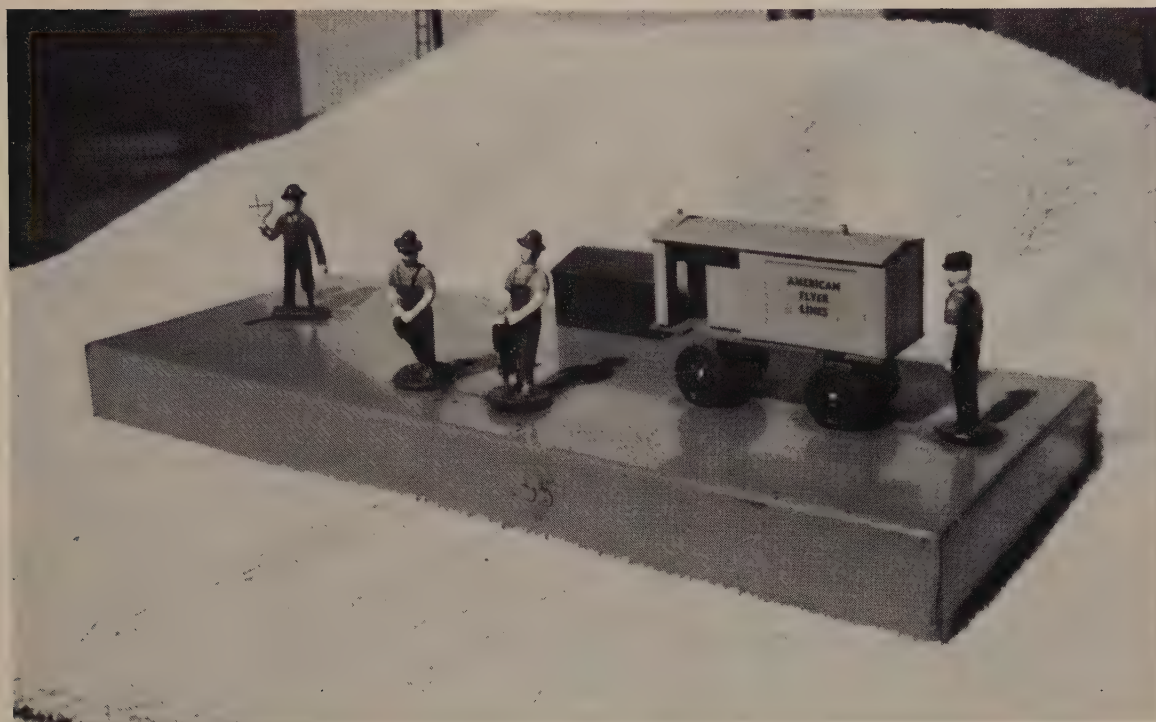




Chicago Gilbert Hall of Science with train layout on right, sets on left.



## 1946-1966 Collector Series by Dave Garrigues and Peter Jugle



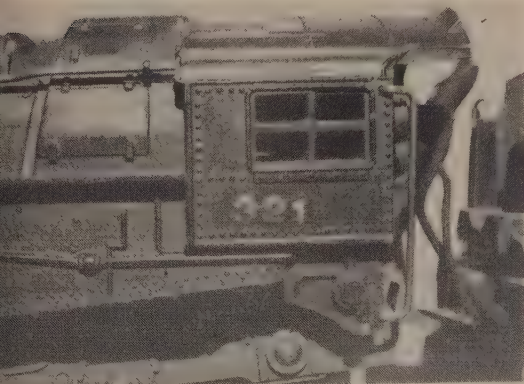
No. 594 animated track gang set (1941 version is shown).

## 1946 Largest AF catalog first year

In 1946 the American Flyer line of "S" gauge trains was introduced. That year American Flyer had what is probably the largest consumer catalog of electric trains ever printed. It measured 10¼" x 29" when opened.

A considerable amount of re-tooling was done to change their 3/16" scale O gauge trains of pre-war days to S gauge. Basically, they didn't introduce any new style of equipment except an observation in the Pullman series, a log dump car and a few accessories.

### 321 Hudson



Several locomotives were listed with different equipment. Smoke and Choo-Choo were new this year. Some were listed without Smoke or Choo-Choo. This is how the basic number series on locomotives started:

The first digit (3) indicated locomotive. The second digit (0, 1, 2, 3, 4) indicated the type of locomotive. The third digit (0, 1, 2) indicated the equipment. Thus, the 300, 301 were Reading Atlantics. The 310, 311, 312 were Pennsylvania K-5's. The 320, 321, 322 were New York Central Hudsons. The 331, 332 were Union Pacific 4-8-4's. The 342 was a Nickel Plate 0-8-0.

If the last digit was (2), it had Smoke and Choo-Choo. If the last digit was (1) it was supposed to have a Choo-Choo unit only. If the last digit was (0), it was plain. All Smoke and Choo-Choo units were tender-mounted in 1946. Thus, the 300, 310, 320 were plain. The 301, 311, 321, 331 were supposed to be Choo-Choo only. And the 312, 322, 332, 342 had Smoke and Choo-Choo.

Apparently it was decided not to make the Choo-Choo unit separate from the smoke unit. The 301, 311, 331 locomotives have not turned up. The 321 Hudson was made either plain or with Smoke and Choo-Choo, which means they stamped up bodies in anticipation of Choo-Choo only, then used them as regular locos. The 321 even turns up as a 1947 322. The 301 was made in 1953, but is a plastic engine and has a locomotive-mounted Choo-Choo unit.

### NO. 341 NOT MADE

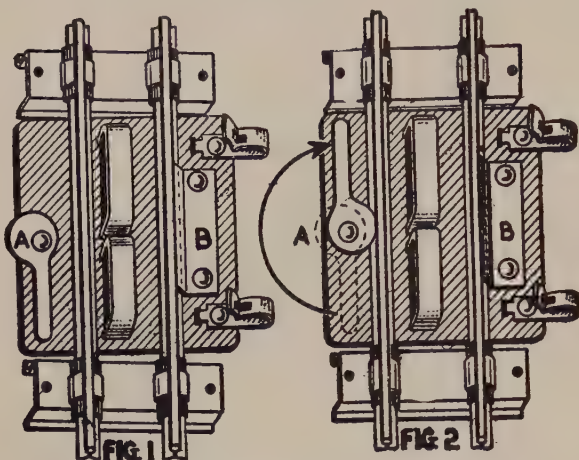
Another loco that was proposed, but never cataloged or made, was a 341, which would have been a Nickel Plate 0-8-0 with tender-mounted bell. They did catalog an 0-8-0 with a bell prior to the war in their 3/16" O gauge line, but never produced that either. The holes in the chassis of the production model are identical with that of my sample model, indicating that they had not revised their setup, and therefore had not produced the bell.

Actually, American Flyer didn't list



# AMERICAN FLYER

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTACHING 3/16 SCALE TRACK TRIP No. 695



To install, follow diagram carefully when reading instructions.

- 1.—Hold track trip in right hand with the two wire clips facing right and the handle of the locking lever "A" pointing toward you.
- 2.—Insert track trip under track so that bottom of right rail nests under the raised portion of the metal strip "B" (Fig. 1).
- 3.—Holding the track trip up against the bottom of the rails, turn the locking lever so handle faces away from you and locks on left rail. (Fig. 2)

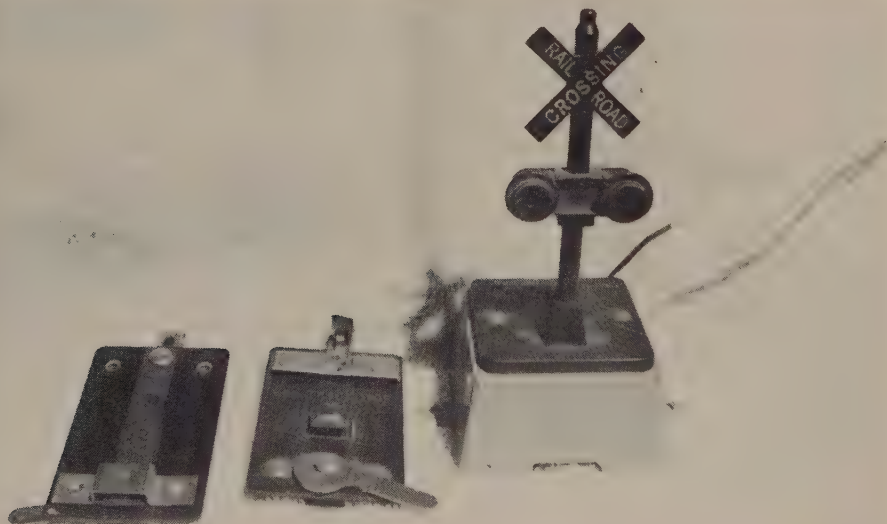
This track trip is designed to operate various types of equipment, the contact being made when the two small buttons on the bottom of the locomotive ride over the two contacts in the track trip.

*Developed at the Gilbert Hall of Science*

**THE A. C. GILBERT COMPANY**  
New Haven, Conn., U. S. A.

M-2380-Made in U. S. A.-Printed in U. S. A.

No. 582 automatic blinker signal with No. 696 track trips. Note short pressure plate.



the lower numbers of each engine in the catalog. What they did was to list the components of the set and below that, list another set number with the caption "Same as above, but without Smoke feature," or "Same as above, but without Choo-Choo and Smoke feature."

One of the interesting things in 1946 was that American Flyer and Lionel were both trying to keep it a secret about their new smoke features. At the Gilbert factory, it was forbidden to mention smoke at all. It was referred to as "Choo-Choo and X." By the time the catalogs were printed, it was all right to mention smoke. However, on page 21 of the 1946 catalog they still described the 342 switcher as having "Choo-Choo and X." The 1946 set boxes which were not smoking were marked / no "X".

The following is a list of the proposed sets for 1946:

- 4601 300 frt train
- 4602 301 frt train
- 4603 300 pass train
- 4604 301 pass train
- 4605 310 frt train
- 4606 311 frt train
- 4607 312 frt train
- 4608 311 pass train
- 4609 312 pass train
- 4610 321 frt train
- 4611 322 frt train
- 4612 321 pass train
- 4613 322 pass train
- 4614 331 frt train
- 4615 332 frt train
- 4616 331 pass train
- 4617 332 pass train
- 4618 342 pass train
- 4619 312 frt train with log loader
- 4620 322 frt train with coal loader
- 4621 332 pass train with mail car
- 4622 332-342 two train set

### NO EVEN NUMBERS

The dealer's catalog, however, did not list any even numbered sets up through No. 4616; neither did the price list dated Oct. 11, 1946. The price list also listed six other sets as "not available." These were Nos. 4607, 4615, 4617, 4618, 4620, 4621. They also listed a set No. 4103 as "not available" in the price list. This is an O gauge Reading Atlantic freight set. They did make this set and the No. 4607 set, indicating that they might have updated the price list later. Set No. 4610 was also made, but came with loco 320.

One of the identifying features of



the 1946 locomotives is the round head rivets on the valve gear. This is a carry-over from pre-war days. After 1946 most locomotives had hex head rivets. Another feature was the brass contact buttons on the bottom of the loco chassis. These were used to make contact with the No. 695 automatic track trip. There is some question as to whether the No. 695 automatic track trip was ever made, since it is not known in any collection.

The No. 696 automatic track trip, which was made for many years, was different in 1946. The pressure plate was only 5/16 inch in length as compared with the later one which was an inch in length.

The 1946 locomotives all had the remote control reverse units mounted in the boiler with the lever protruding from the top of the locomotive. The tender had only the road name across the side in 1946. Later this changed to "American Flyer Lines," with the road name herald.

Another feature was the weightless link coupler with a narrow (1/8") shank. Most of these had a black coupler bar, although some were nickel. Late in the year they changed to a wider (3/16") shank. Apparently they were having a breakage problem. All of the tenders and cars from 1946 used these types of couplers.

#### PLASTICS USED

Plastics were used extensively in the production of 1946 freight and passenger cars. Gilbert used a whole page in the 1946 catalog pointing this out, and mentioned this as a feature in every set.

All of the C&NW flat bed cars, 627-628-634-635, had plastic chassis' which were either grey or white. Many of these warped badly and in 1947 they decided to make these out of diecast metal. This also happened to the chassis of the cattle cars, tank cars, cabooses and box cars. The latter three were switched to diecast metal late in 1946.

One of the most interesting cars is the hopper, which was first made of diecast metal and later in 1946 was made of plastic.

Some of the interesting accessories for 1946 were the 582 Automatic Blinker Signal, 584 Bell Danger Signal, 587 Block Signal, 588 Semaphore and the 594 Animated Track Gang Set. All of these were introduced just prior to the war and continued to be cataloged through 1947. The post-war versions differed slightly in wiring or in the

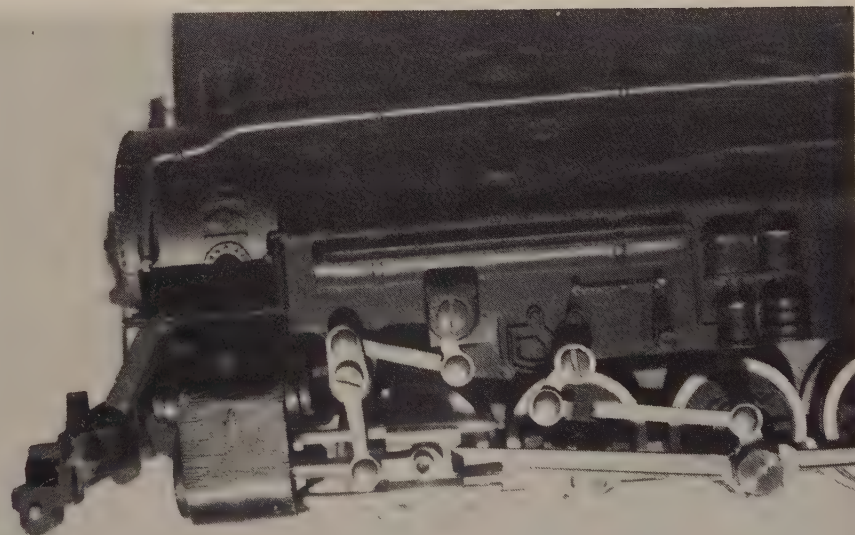
track trips that were furnished, or both.

The No. 720 Remote Control Switches were unique in 1946. They had black rail and contacts in them that shut off when they switched. The controls for them did not spring back to center. These are the only switches they made that can safely be used with a track trip to make them "non-derailing." They can be readily identified by the wire soldered to a rivet on the bottom of the switch motor. The 1947 switches look identical otherwise. The No. 720 Remote Control Switches also had a "Two Train Operation" feature which enabled you to shut off power to a siding.

One of the outstanding items for 1946 was the No. 4622 "American Flyer Complete Railroad System." This included a No. 342 0-8-0 with a freight set, a No. 332 4-8-4 with a passenger set and many accessories. The layout was an oval with a passing siding. The trains were controlled independently because of the "Two Train Operation" feature of the remote control switches, as shown on page 28 of the 1946 catalog.

All in all, American Flyer had an interesting year in 1946. Some items are very scarce, and others are not known to exist.

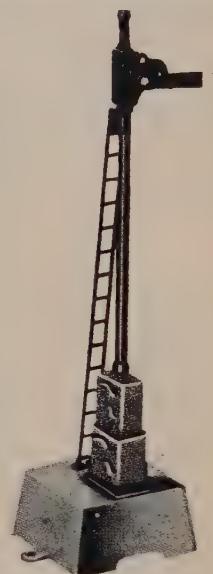
BELOW. 1946 valve gear with round head rivets.



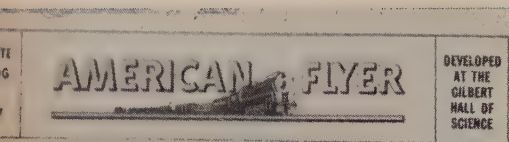
**No. 695 AUTOMATIC TRACK TRIP**  
Fits into straight track section, completes circuit as train passes. Operates gate signals or other automatic equipment

**TOP. No. 695 Automatic track trip.**

**No. 588 Semaphore Block Signal** — Realistic operation. Semaphore arm goes horizontal, lights to red to stop train—raises to vertical, lights to green to proceed. Electrically operated by remote control for one train. Two train no-collision operation works automatically from track trips. Enamel finish. Size 7 1/2" high, base 1 3/4" x 1 3/4". \$5.95.





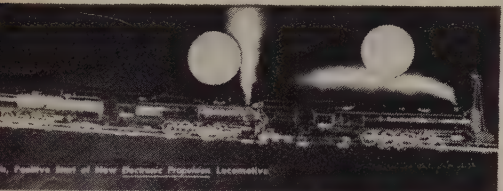


## PRODUCING SENSATIONAL NEW LOCOMOTIVE

Stroboscopic photographs—taken at 1/10,000 of a second—show how it provides simpler, positive remote control of direction of train and banishes jockeying back and forth after stops.



**RD LOCOMOTIVES**—In (1) stop the train and take it in reverse; in (2) stop the train and take it in forward motion; in (3) stop the train and take it in reverse; in (4) stop the train and take it in forward motion. The photograph above accurately portrays the "Electronic Propulsion" locomotive in performing these four operations.



**RD LOCOMOTIVES**—In (1) stop the train and take it in reverse; in (2) stop the train and take it in forward motion; in (3) stop the train and take it in reverse; in (4) stop the train and take it in forward motion. The photograph above accurately portrays the "Electronic Propulsion" locomotive in performing these four operations.

### The 1947 catalog



### The No. 14 transformer operated the Electronic Propulsion locos.



1947

# Electronic propulsion locomotives

The year 1947 was one of few changes for American Flyer, but probably the most important new feature was the introduction of the "Electronic Propulsion" locomotives.

"Electronic Propulsion" was just a fancy name for direct current operation. DC motors were offered only in the No. 332 UP 4-8-4 and the 342 NKP 0-8-0. The other locomotives were not offered with DC motors, even up through 1950 when DC operation was discontinued. This is interesting because in the 1947 catalog Gilbert had stroboscopic photographs comparing the standard AC operation to the "Electronic Propulsion" DC operation. The captions of the pictures mentioned the "confusion and lack of precision" in controlling the direction

of the AC locomotives as compared to the "smooth positive control" of the DC locomotives.

Usually, comparisons were made between American Flyer and Lionel. Regardless of the "confusion and lack of precision" which wasn't really that bad, American Flyer continued with AC operation until 1966.

The problem with American Flyer's AC operation was the reverse unit. The coil was on all the time, whether it was locked out or not, allowing it to become magnetized. The arm did not drop down properly each time, once it was magnetized. This was easily remedied by putting a rubber band on the tab by the Lockout Lever to force it up. Had AF expanded their DC operation to the full line, a lot of problems would have been solved.

### ELECTRONIC RECTIFIER

To operate the new "Electronic Propulsion" Locomotives, Gilbert introduced the new No. 14 Electronic Rectifier in 1947. This converted AC to DC through a special rectifier tube made exclusively for the No. 14 Rectifier by Sylvania. When under load, the tube changed color, from red to blue.

The No. 14 Rectifier could also be used to run regular AC trains. With an AC and a DC train, they could be controlled independently as shown on page seven of the 1947 catalog.

The regular consumer catalog for 1947 was the same large size as the 1946 catalog. Even the front cover looked the same, but the contents were different.

Many of the items that were listed in 1946 were dropped from the 1947 catalog. The 301, 311, 321, 331 locomotives and their sets were no longer listed. Many of the HO items were dropped. This is probably because the HO line wasn't introduced until 1947. All the sets that had included locomotives No. 332 and 342 in 1946 were listed as having the new "Electronic Propulsion." All of these changes and

### The Electronic Propulsion motor.



improvements were listed on page three of the Gilbert catalog No. D1482.

Later, in catalog insert No. D1489, Gilbert listed sets No. 4730, 4731, 4732 and 4733 as AC versions of the sets No. 4618, 4615, 4617 and 4621 respectively.

Finally, in catalog No. D1502, Gilbert combined all the sets for a complete listing.

Oddly enough, after all the trouble Gilbert went through to re-catalog the AC versions of the 332 and 342, they apparently didn't make the 332 with an AC motor in 1947. It has never turned up in any collection. The AC version of the 342 does exist and is not uncommon. However, the DC version of the 342 for 1947 is very scarce.

The locomotives for 1947 continued to have the Smoke and Choo Choo units in the tender.

The instruction manual for 1947 listed two types of smoke units. The other is a gear-driven piston located in the front part of the locomotive boiler that forces the smoke directly out of the stack.

#### AMERICAN FLYER LINES

The letters on the tender went from only a road name to "American Flyer Lines" with a road name herald in 1947, figuring that a little free advertising wouldn't hurt. The couplers

were still the weightless 3/16" shank links that were introduced late in 1946.

Most passenger cars, as well as some freights, were painted. Most 1946 cars were bright shiny "never fade" plastic. In 1947 the cars were painted to give a more realistic look. Unfortunately, the paint didn't stick well on the Pullmans.

The six-wheel trucks on the Pullmans were unusually long. They had a wheelbase of 2 1/4" with a pivot point near the first axle. This made the rear of the truck swing out.

For this reason, the rear wheels on the Pullman trucks were blind (flangeless). These long trucks were a carryover from pre-war days. They don't work very well and were discontinued after 1947.

Most of the lightweight plastic chassis cars were changed to diecast

metal in 1947. However, the catalog still listed as a feature in every set the "Lightweight Plastic Cars."

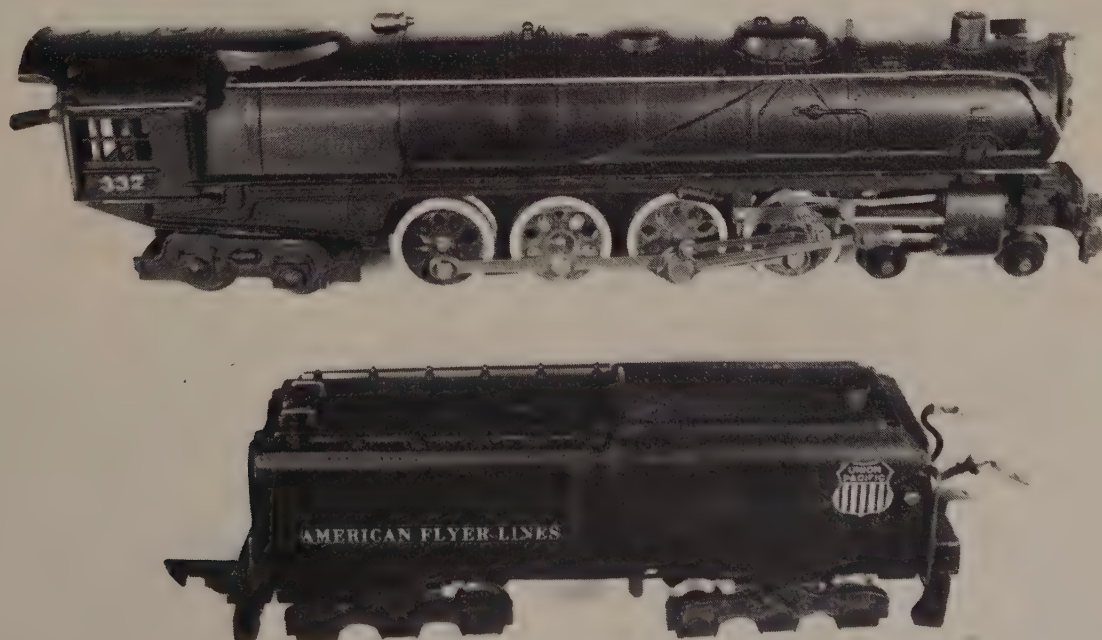
Still listed in the 1947 catalog was the No. 625 orange Shell tank car which wasn't made past 1946.

The No. 4622 "American Flyer Complete Railroad System" was available again in 1947. However, both the 332 and 342 locomotives were equipped with the new "Electronic Propulsion" DC motors. The set also included the new No. 14 Electronic Rectifier.

American Flyer expanded its production in 1947 and made more items available than in 1946. Some 1947 items are still very scarce. The marketing effort picked up as newspaper color comics, ads, sales kits and more displays became available.



Long (1947) and standard (1948) truck Pullmans; 1947 No. 332 with "AF Lines," DC motor, smoke in tender.





1948

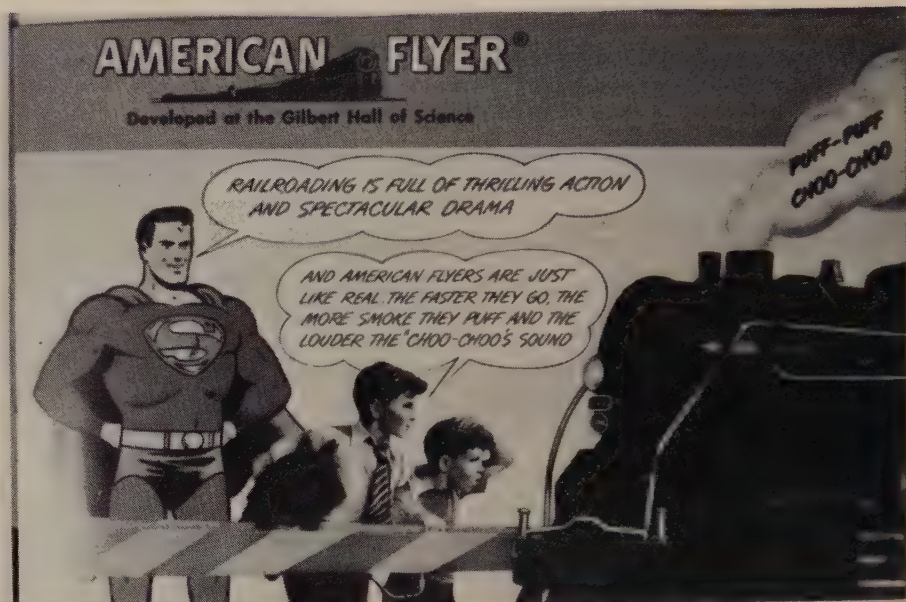
# Best sales, improvements went together

The year of 1948 saw many improvements for American Flyer. It was also one of their best years for sales.

One of the major relocation improvements was completion of the changing of the Smoke and Choo Choo unit in the locomotive which had started in late 1947. This eliminated the need for two motors and gave better synchronization of the Smoke and Choo Choo to the speed of the locomotive. This, of course, also cut down maintenance.

By moving the Smoke and Choo Choo Unit to the locomotive, the reverse unit had to be moved to the tender on the AC motor locomotives. This improved the appearance of the locomotive in that it didn't have the reverse lever protruding from the top of the boiler. It also meant that the smoke filler cap on top of the tender and the rubber tube between the locomotive and tender were eliminated. The headlight was also removed from the locomotive chassis to the boiler front.

Even the Reading 4-4-2 sported a Smoke and Choo Choo Unit for 1948. The number was changed to 302 from 300 to indicate the added feature. All of the locos that had previously been without Smoke and Choo Choo (300, 310, 320) were dropped. These locos were now available only with Smoke



Inside Superman catalog.

and Choo Choo as number 302, 312, 322 respectively.

## NEW LOCOMOTIVE

A new locomotive was added to the 1948 American Flyer Line. It was the No. 350 Baltimore & Ohio streamlined "Royal Blue." This locomotive was offered only in the lowest-priced set and did not have Smoke and Choo Choo. This locomotive was available before the war in the 3/16" scale O gauge line. Why it was not offered prior to 1948 in the S gauge version is somewhat of a mystery. The boiler

Cover of special 1948 Superman catalog.

casting and the tender are basically the same as the pre-war version.

There are several variations on the 1948 No. 350 "Royal Blue." The earliest ones had the tender drawbar connected to the brace across the back of the cab, and had a separate two-wheel trailing truck on the locomotive. The later version had the drawbar and loco trailing truck as one unit. The early tenders had the indented side where it said "American Flyer Lines."

The very earliest tenders also had the B&O herald on the rear of the tender rather than the front. It is also strange that Gilbert did not make the New Haven style coaches in blue to match the S gauge "Royal Blue" as they had done in the pre-war O gauge line. The No. 350 "Royal Blue" was only offered in a freight set.

Another improvement in late 1947 and through 1948 was the addition of metal weights to the link couplers. This kept the couplers from coming apart much better than the older unweighted couplers. The weights were brass colored which is one of the identifying features of the 1948 equipment.

In 1948 the crosshead guide was redesigned and improved. The earlier models have the crosshead guides bolted to the steamchest and were open at the rear. This was all right un-





til a bind developed and then it would usually get bent out of shape.

The later version had the rear solid and bolted to the boiler at the top. The front end slipped into holes in the steamchest which held it solid. The 1948 Union Pacific 4-8-4 and the Nickel Plate Road 0-8-0 have only turned up with the latest style crosshead guides. However, the Reading 4-4-2, Pennsy 4-6-2, and the NYC 4-6-4 are found with both styles.

#### DC RE-INTRODUCED

In 1948, the direct current operation was re-introduced. Apparently, in 1947, it didn't sell too well. This is ob-

vious since very few 1947 DC locomotives have been found.

The name was changed from "Electronic Propulsion" to "Directronic Propulsion" in 1948. Again, it was a "new" feature. This was probably done to make it sound like something completely different. The only real difference was the device to control the DC locomotives. In 1947 a special No. 14 rectifier was used. This was dropped in 1948 and replaced with a No. 15 rectifier which had to be used in conjunction with a regular transformer. The reversing switch to change the polarity of the direct cur-

rent was mounted on the rectifier base. The transformer was used to control the speed of the train.

The direct current version of the "Nickel Plate Road" 0-8-0 had a suffix added to its number and became No. 342 DC.

Another change, but not an improvement, was made to the 302 and 312 locomotives. The trailing truck of the locomotive changed from a separate unit to part of the tender drawbar. This didn't affect the looks of the 302 much, but it did eliminate the better-looking trailing truck of the 312.

#### DEPRESSED CENTER FLAT

The only new car in the 1948 line was the No. 636 depressed center flat car. It was diecast metal and had six-wheel trucks like the Pullman series passenger cars of 1948. These were a shorter 1 5/8" wheelbase truck as compared to the longer 2 1/4" wheelbase truck of 1946-47. The 1948 catalog shows an artist's conception of the No. 636 flat car with diecast trucks like the six-wheel tender trucks. This car was never made in this way since the diecast trucks would not fit properly.

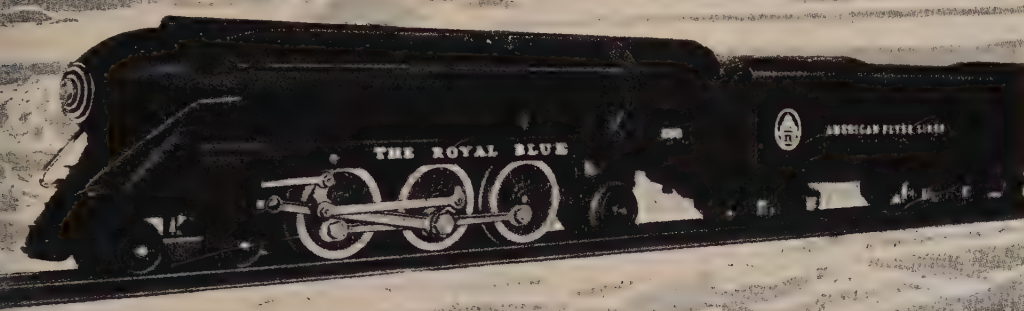
The only accessory that was new for 1948 was the No. 755 Talking Station. Actually, this was available prior to the war but in different colors. The new colors for 1948 were red and white. The pre-war colors were brown and yellow. When set up, the station stopped the train, played the record and started the train running again.

About this same time, Superman was a very popular comic strip character. Gilbert decided that they would use him to help promote their toys and trains. A special Superman catalog was issued with him appearing throughout the catalog. It was a small pocket-size catalog.

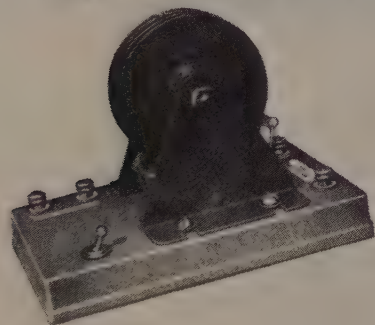
One of the oddities of 1948 was the No. 635 wrecking crane. It normally came with a yellow cab and red roof. However, it also is found with a red cab and red roof. Another version has a yellow cab with a black roof. There weren't a lot of oddities in 1948; most of the items are relatively common.

The No. 4622 "Complete Railroad System," which had been a feature in 1946 and 1947, was no longer available. This had not been a good selling item anyway, since very few have turned up.

American Flyer expanded production in 1948. They also upgraded their line with the many improvements that were made.



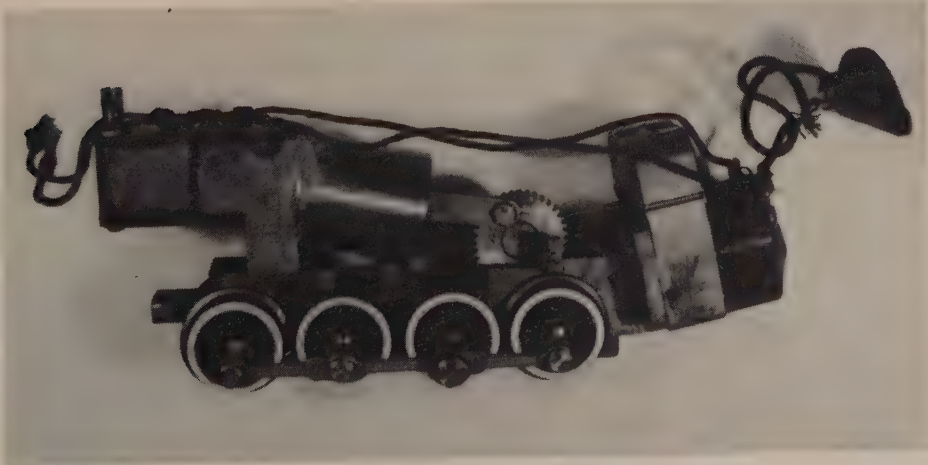
### NEW! NO. 15 DIRECTRONIC RECTIFIER



Must be used for  
Directronic Propulsion Locomotives  
Capacity — 4 Amperes

Converts A.C. to D.C. so that power is supplied to the locomotive in a continuous stream instead of intermittently as with A.C. Equipped with a toggle switch and two sets of terminals for transformer and track connections, the Directronic Rectifier must always be used with a transformer.

This converted AC to DC in a continuous stream.



New 1948 locomotive-mounted Smoke and Choo Choo.



They Puff Smoke—They "CHOO-CHOO"—They Whistle  
THEY RUN ON REAL 2-RAIL TRACK



Cover of dealer catalog D1525.

# 1949

## 1949 saw many new items

The year of 1949 saw many new accessories and scenic supplies for the American Flyer line of S gauge trains. Number 21 Grass, 22 Gravel, and 23 Coal were introduced. Prior to this, the coal had only been available with the No. 716 Hopper Car and the No. 752 Seaboard Coaler.

The No. 763 Mountain Set consisted of three pieces which simulated mountain gaps. This was also sold as an HO gauge item.

The No. 30 Highway Signs, No. 31 Railroad Signs, and No. 32 City Street Equipment Sets were new for 1949. Each set consisted of eight diecast metal pieces.

The No. 762 Billboard with 2-in-1 whistle was similar to the regular Billboard Whistle except that it had a solenoid to change the tone. It can readily be identified by the Erector Ad on the Billboard.

The new No. 760 Highway Flasher was introduced to replace the older No. 582 Signal, although the No. 582 version was pictured in the consumer catalog as a No. 760. The No. 760 version was pictured in the dealer catalogs.

Sam the Semaphore No. 758 was first introduced in 1949. When the button was pressed, Sam would come out of his shack, the semaphore arm dropped and the train stopped. With the release of the button, the arm went up, Sam went back into his shack, and the train started up.

The operation of the No. 761 semaphore was similar to that of No. 758 Sam the Semaphore, except Sam and his shack were not included. The Semaphore itself was larger and the unit was designed to be worked with two track trips instead of a button. In this way, automatic track blocks could be operated.

### TRACK TORPEDO

One item that was proposed but

never made was the No. 765 Track Torpedo. This was only shown in Catalog No. D1525 which was a dealer's catalog. It apparently was going to be some sort of sound device.

Here's what the catalog said about it: "Two bangs slow train down — three bangs stop it. An exclusive American Flyer invention that brings the sensational new thrill of stopping or slowing trains by remote 'Torpedo' Control. 'Torpedoes' are 'Fired' by pressing a push button. Unit uses no explosives and is perfectly safe. Can be added to any train system." Not much else can be said about the No. 765 Track Torpedo since it was not produced. Maybe it could have run into many complications.

Another new item for 1949 was the No. 7 Electric Eye. This was really a Science Toy item, but it had so many uses that it was incorporated into the Train Accessory Line. It could be used to stop or start trains by waving your hand. Street lights could be turned on by striking a match. It could be used to count cars in a train. There were many different things that could be done with this unique device.

The year 1949 saw only one new style of locomotive. It was the No. 290 Pacific and was modeled after the New Haven Type 4-6-2. The tender did not have any road name stamped on it, just "American Flyer." This is



LEFT. Pages of catalogs show Track Torpedo and whistle in tender.



the first engine that did not conform to the basic numbering system. It had Smoke and Choo-Choo so it would have been No. 292—not No. 290.

Maybe the Smoke and Choo-Choo were not planned initially, thereby giving it the number 290. Much of the detail was different from the production locomotive. The trailing truck was shown to be the better outside frame diecast version, but in production was actually the open wheels like the 302 Atlantic. The artist's version of the tender was also completely different than the production model which used the same style tender as the 302 Atlantic.

#### BEST WHISTLE

The Pennsylvania K-5 Pacific gained a whistle in 1949. The No. 314AW had the first whistle that American Flyer used in an S gauge train, and it was also their best whistle.

Unfortunately, it was activated in a way that was an infringement of Lionel's patent and it was dropped sometime in 1950. A control box, similar in appearance to a No. 1 Transformer, was used to superimpose direct current into the track and close a relay in the tender. The motor driven whistle sounded very realistic, unlike the later style whistles.

The 312AC and 314AW continued to use the drawbar type open wheel trailing truck that was introduced in 1948. It is interesting to note that the 312AC had "American Flyer Lines" and the 314AW had only "American Flyer."

The No. 332 Union Pacific 4-8-4 gained a white stripe on the running board which was kept for the remainder of its years. The tender went to "American Flyer" from "American Flyer Lines."

The No. 14 Rectifier was brought back into the line in 1949 after an absence of one year. The Sylvania Rectifier Tube was re-designed. The new tube number was 1237. The earlier version had been X6089. Later in the year, a change was made in the wiring. The inside post of the AC was connected to the inside post of the DC. The bottom of the Rectifier was stamped with a "B" to indicate that it was "bridged."

The No. 15 Rectifier which had been introduced in 1948 was also available. This gave two different controls for DC operation. For some reason, the name was changed back to "Electronic Propulsion" from "Directronic Propulsion."

Locomotive No. 290 as shown in dealer catalog.



The Track Torpedo No. 765 was proposed but never produced; not much is known about it.

Most of the locomotives had a suffix after the number in 1949 to indicate whether it was AC or DC. The exceptions were the new No. 290 which had an AC motor, and the No. 332 which had a DC motor.

The only new cars for 1949 were the cheaper line of cars that only had the car number and "American Flyer." These were the No. 638 Caboose, No. 639 Box car, No. 640 Hopper, and the No. 641 Gondola.

The No. 715 Unloading car was shown with a Manoil Coupe for the first time in the catalog, although it had been brought out sometime in

1948. Previous models had the Tootsietoy Armored Car.

The catalog changed from the large format used in 1946-1948 to a smaller "standard" sized format which contained both toys and the train line.

Gilbert added many items to its line for 1949, the largest number of them being accessories.





Cutouts, instructions and box for Farm Scene set #5001T.

## 1950 AF's "50 years of progress"

American Flyer was celebrating 50 years of progress in 1950. For the occasion, there were 50 lower prices, 50 new toys, and 50 exclusive features, according to the advance 1950 American Flyer catalog.

Probably the biggest new feature was the introduction of two types of diesels. The Electro-Motive GP-7 was made as number 370. It was painted in silver with blue and yellow striping to match the EMD demonstrator color scheme. The pictures in the catalogs were from the original Gilbert prototype model which was quite different than the production model. The trucks were Miller, which were much shorter than the actual Gilbert trucks. The couplers were shown as actual link couplers, whereas the production models had full width bars for the link couplers to hook on to. The No. 370 Diesel was to have a built-in automatic bell. For some reason, it was never installed. Nine years later, a mechanical bell was introduced in the C&O GP-7. It is difficult to say whether the later bell was similar to the one planned for the No. 370 GP-7.

The second diesel brought out in

1950 was the Alco PA and PB passenger units. These were numbered 360 and 361 respectively. They were cataloged in the Santa Fe Red and Silver "War Bonnet" color scheme, but were also offered in solid chrome finish with Santa Fe markings. The very earliest version was the chrome finish with added wire handrails. It is interesting to note that this version was later pictured in the advance 1951 catalog.

All of the 1950 catalogs showed the Alco diesels to resemble the Gilbert prototype, which was made of brass. It also had Miller power but in custom-made long trucks.

### SF DETAIL MISSING

The earliest catalog shows the Santa Fe diesels with much of the detail missing and also showed both units as having trucks like the Hudson tender. Why this was done is not known.

The train set numbers were different to indicate whether the Santa Fe was chrome or red and silver. Set Nos. 5007 and 5008 had the chrome engines whereas set Nos. 5007A and 5008A had the red and silver engines.

The A&B units were connected by a

fibre drawbar. The back of the B unit was equipped with a regular link coupler.

Another new feature for 1950 was the electronic horn and whistle. There really wasn't any difference between the two, except for the name. The Santa Fe diesel had a horn. The 324AC Hudson and 334DC Northern had the whistle.

The electronic horn and whistle had a special control that plugged into the house current just as a transformer would. There were two adjustment screws on the bottom of the control to adjust the tone.

Toward the end of 1950, some of the sets that normally contained the 334DC loco with the electronic whistle were furnished with a number 332DC loco without the built-in electronic whistle. They included a number 577 whistling billboard as a substitution. The reason for this was the Korean War. From a letter included in these sets: "Uncle Sam has asked us to help the all-out defense effort by releasing for military needs those materials used to make the American Flyer Built-In Train Whistle. How-



ever, we are providing, instead, an American Flyer No. 577 Whistling Billboard. We hope that you are pleased with this substitution and will derive satisfaction from knowing that you, too, are doing your bit in America's Defense Effort."

It is interesting to note that the 334DC was the only Union Pacific 4-8-4 cataloged in 1950. By substituting the 332DC, an uncataloged loco was made.

The 324AC Hudson, which had the electronic whistle, was originally planned to be a direct current loco. The early dealer's catalog listed it as No. 324DC. The Hudson loco was never offered with a DC motor during the four years that Gilbert had direct current operation in their S gauge trains.

In 1950, the last year of DC operation, the rectifier was re-numbered from No. 14 to No. 16. What the exact changes were aren't clear. Both looked alike and they both were 150-watt capacity.

## ROYAL BLUE

The "Royal Blue" loco No. 350 was again in the line after an absence of one year. It was only cataloged separately, but was offered in an uncataloged Set No. 50T. This set included a new No. 642 red "American Flyer Lines" box car, a No. 631 green T&P gondola and a No. 638 red "American Flyer Lines" caboose.

There are many variations of the 1950 model "Royal Blue." Some had handrails, some didn't. Most had "American Flyer" on the tender but a few had "The Royal Blue." One of the major differences between the 1948 model and the 1950 model is the color. The blue is considerably darker on the 1948 model.

To complement the "Royal Blue" loco, a new train set was introduced. It was the colorful American Flyer "Circus Train." The locomotive was the same streamlined bullet type like the "Royal Blue." However, it was red with yellow letterings and the number was 353. The locomotive hauled two flat cars with cages and a circus Pullman. Also included with the set were cardboard cut-outs to make a circus scene.

Another interesting set was the number 5001T "American Flyer Railroad System with Farm Scene." It consisted of a No. 300AC Atlantic, four freight cars, and cardboard cutouts to make five farm buildings and two vehicles. Not too many of these cardboard pieces have survived, making them quite scarce.

The K-5 Pennsy 4-6-2 regained the better looking, enclosed trailing truck which it lost sometime in 1948. The two K-5's for 1950 were the 312AC and the 314AW.

Many new cars were added to the line in 1950. Some of the freight cars were the No. 719 Automatic Dump car, the No. 734 Operating Box car, the No. 644 200-ton Wrecking Crane, the No. 645 Work Caboose, and the No. 646 Power Floodlight car. The No. 646 car was unique in 1950, having a diecast generator consisting of several parts bolted together. All the later versions of this car had plastic generators.

New passenger cars included a set of four streamlined aluminum cars. They were No. 660 Combine, No. 661 Coach, No. 662 Vista Dome, and No. 663 Observation. These cars were very heavy. For this reason, only three aluminum passenger cars were used in a given set.

A No. 732 Operating Baggage car was added to the line to match the

New Haven style coaches. It was available in red or green.

Many new accessories were added in 1950. The No. 28 Ballast and No. 29 Snow were added to the scenery line.

The No. 35 Brakeman Set was added to the existing figure line. These men had wires on their backs so they could be attached to locomotives.

The No. 749 Street Lights were new, along with the No. 754 Double Trestle Bridge, the No. 764 Express Office, No. 767 Roadside Diner, No. 768 Oil Supply Depot, No. 769 Aircraft Beacon, No. 772 Water Tower, and the No. 773 Oil Derrick.

The billboard whistle No. 577 was changed to show some trains rather than the circus advertisement. It was also available without lights and became No. 577NL.

The electromatic crane was improved in 1950. The reverse unit was replaced by a double wound field motor and a two-button control. It was much easier to operate this way. The new number was 583A.

A new No. 770 loading platform was made to use with either the No. 734 Box car or the No. 732 Baggage car.

The No. 771 Operating Stock Yard with the No. 736 Stock car was introduced in 1950. This was a very popular accessory and many were sold.

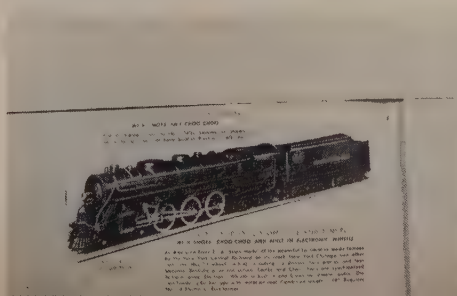
A series of six 15 minute films under the name "American Flyer Boys Railroad Club" filmed for use on TV and through the industrial marketing of *Modern Talking Picture Service*, was made available for group showing. There are several examples of the electronic whistle in these films.

American Flyer had a very colorful year in 1950. It was a year that will be long remembered.

RIGHT. Santa Fe diesels with Hudson tender trucks; new cars included the work caboose, circus flat and power floodlight car.



RIGHT. Early catalog listing of 324DC loco; #5001T set with farm scene.





# Better than ever for '51

In 1951 American Flyer had few new items, but had many changes. One of the more important changes was the introduction of the new Air Chime Whistle. This was supposed to be "An exact sound reproduction of the famous 'Nathan Air Chime Whistle' in service on nearly 100 U.S. railroads."

It differed from the Electronic Whistle of 1950 in that it drew its power from the transformer rather than plugging into a 120-volt outlet itself. It was also a much smaller control unit. It consisted of a tin can with a vibrator in it that plugged into a single button control. It was a much more reliable unit than the "Electronic Whistle."

The components in the train for the Air Chime Whistle were quite similar in appearance to the earlier Electronic Whistle, except for a cardboard-type speaker used instead of the Bakelite type.

## AIR CHIME LOCOMOTIVES

There is some confusion as to which locomotives actually came with the Air Chime Whistle in 1951. Six locomotives were to have the new whistle. These included the 295 Pacific, the 305 Atlantic, the 315 K-5 Pacific, the 325 AC Hudson, the 335 Northern and the 365 Santa Fe diesel which consisted of a No. 360 A-unit, and a No. 364 B-unit. Of the six locomotives, three were definitely produced in 1951. These were the 295 Pacific, the 325AC Hudson and the No. 365 Santa Fe Diesel.

The 315 K-5 Pacific was listed in all versions of the 1951 dealer's catalogs, but was not listed in the consumer catalog. However, on page 17 of the consumer catalog, it was shown. At any rate, the 315 K-5 Pacific was sidelined until 1952 when it was actually produced.

## NO. 335 STORY

The 335 has a very interesting story behind it. Being the largest steam loco in the line, it would have been normal to play it up big as having the new Air Chime Whistle. However, for reasons unknown, it was never mentioned in any of the catalogs at all. It shows in the consumer catalog on page 12 as No. 335, although the set came with a 332AC loco. The American Flyer Service Manual does list a No. 335 loco along with the K335 which was a 1952 production locomotive. One original

factory replacement boiler for a No. 335 is known to exist. I suspect there is more to be uncovered about this loco.

Then there is the story of the 305 Atlantic loco with Air Chime Whistle. There are three versions of the 1951 dealer's catalog. The first of the three lists a set No. 51WT which would have contained the 305 Atlantic. My copy of this catalog came from Maurice Romer, who at the time was chief engineer of American Flyer Trains at Gilbert.

Most sets had a price next to them that was written by hand. Set No. 51WT merely said "No." This set was to have a 25-watt two-post transformer, which I believe is not capable of operating an Air Chime Whistle. The other two dealer catalogs and the consumer catalog do not list Set No. 51WT or any other set that would have contained the 305 Atlantic.

The consumer catalog does list and show a 305 Atlantic on pages 18 and 19. However, in the middle of the description is printed "Sorry—Not Available." There is a possibility that the Gilbert factory did make some samples of the 305 Atlantic, but it was never put into production. I have personally examined two locomotives purported to be original 305 Atlantics. Both were different and neither was original. I have seen a picture of a third example, and it appears to be different from the two I examined.

## NO 305

If a few samples were made, it would seem that they would all be pretty much alike. My opinion is that the 305 Atlantic does not exist in any form at this time, and that if it did it would probably be a "305AC" as all steam locos produced in 1951 had the suffix of "AC" except the 290 and 295. I would appreciate comments on this controversy.

To accommodate the Air Chime Whistle in the 295 Pacific, spring loaded pickups were built into the tender trucks. This was for better contact and to help hold down the static that resounded from the speaker. Because the standard truck was too short, a new six spring truck was introduced. This appeared on many cars, also, sometimes mixed with a shorter four sprung truck.

One of the interesting variations for 1951 was the long tender chassis used

on some of the 300 AC Atlantics. It was actually the chassis for the circus tender, which is about three-quarters of an inch longer than usual.

As for the circus train, it was cataloged again in 1951, but there probably weren't any produced that year. There were so many around from the previous year that it's listed again. The cars were produced as late as 1952, though.

There were a couple of new freight cars added to the line. The 625 Gulf tank car made its first appearance. There were two versions: the earliest had the "SEPX" Shell markings, and the later had the "GRCX" Gulf markings.

## REFRIGERATOR CAR

Another new car for 1951 was the refrigerator car. It came as a yellow No. 639 or a red No. 642. Oddly enough, these cars were never cataloged, and the cartons they came in always read "Box Car."

Many color variations in freight cars appeared in 1951. The red 631 T&P Gondola and the gray 641 AF Gondola were made. These are both very uncommon. The 715 Unloading Auto car and the 716 Unloading hopper were made with gray chassis instead of black.

The 645 Work Caboose gained a tool box and became 645A. Many of the accessories gained the suffix "A" which indicated some improvement or change. Some of the more notable ones were the 752A Seaboard Coaler which had a chute door with solenoid added so that coal could be stored in the bunker. The 755A Talking Station included a built-in resistor to eliminate the need to lock out the locomotive reverse unit.

The 758A Semaphore Man now had a two-button control instead of the single button that had to be held down as long as the train was stopped.

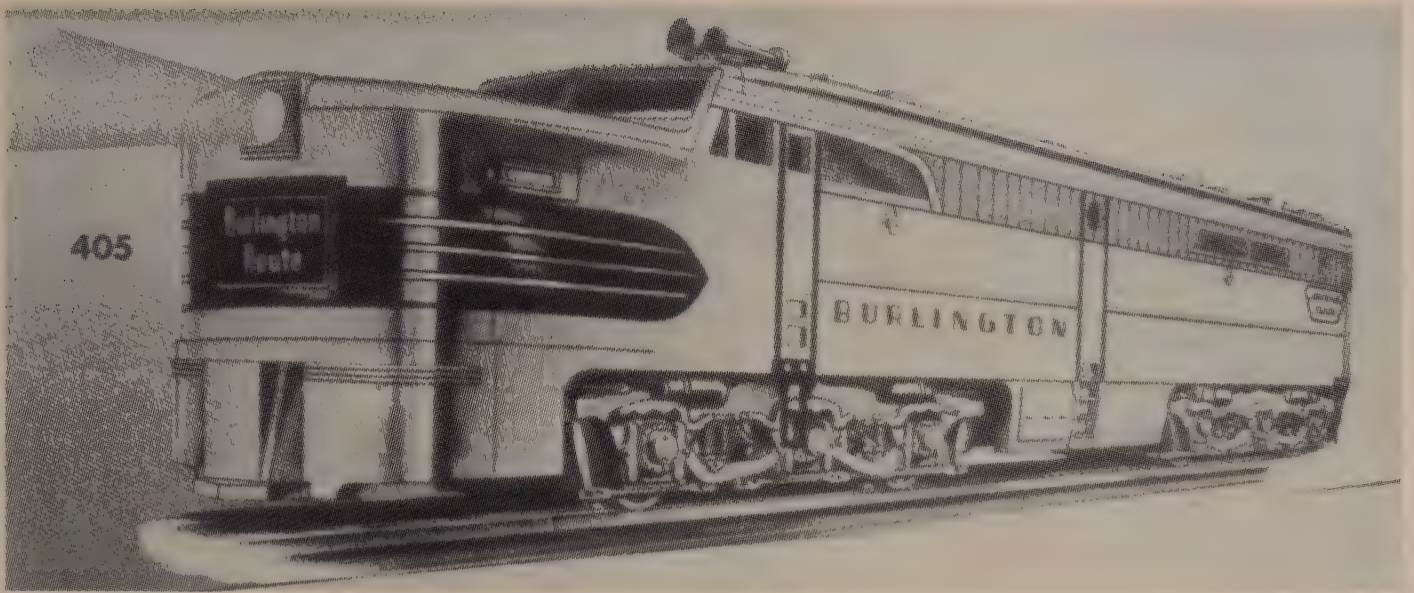
Most of the scenery material was given new packages and became 21A, 28A, etc.

A new number was assigned to the whistling billboard. The No. 577 NL of 1950 was now No. 566.

New accessories included the No. 33 Passenger and Train Figure Set, the No. 748 Footbridge, and the No. 774 Floodlight Tower.

In all, American Flyer had a lot of interesting items in 1951.





No. 405 Burlington diesel shown in early catalog.

## 1952 'Knuckles' made in 1952

In 1952 American Flyer introduced knuckle couplers but they were available only in sets No. K5206W and K5210W. Set No. K5206W consisted of a No. K325 Hudson locomotive, a No. 929 Cattle car, a No. 931 Gondola, a No. 925 Tank car, and a No. 930 Caboose. This was basically the same as set No. 5106W from 1951, except for the knuckle couplers. Set No. K5210W consisted of a No. K335 Northern, a No. 931 Gondola, a No.

928 Pressed Wood Log car, a No. 944 Crane and a No. 945 Work Caboose. This set differed from the 1951 set No. 5110 in that it had knuckle couplers and a whistle. The 900 number series indicated knuckle couplers.

There were two types of knuckle couplers made in 1952. The earlier ones were riveted to the cars and were fastened to the tenders with a screw. They also had a different appearance than the more common later type. So far, they seem to come only on the No. K5206W Hudson freight set. None of the cars were available separately with knuckle couplers in 1952.

### 'LIGHTED' SMOKE

Introduced along with the knuckle couplers on locomotive No. K325 was the lighted smoke feature. This was just a simple matter of replacing the brass smoke stack with a clear plastic one. The headlight would shine up from the inside through the smoke stack and light up the smoke as it came out. This was the only locomotive to have this feature.

An all-new type of steam locomotive was introduced in 1952. It was a plastic boiler model of the C&NW 4-6-2. Two numbers were available. The 282 had Smoke and Choo Choo only. The 285 had Smoke, Choo Choo and an air chime whistle. These new locomotives replaced locomotives No. 290 and No. 295 which were dropped

from the line in 1952. The earliest 1952 catalog still showed the 290 type locomotive. Both locomotives had the sheet metal tender similar to the Atlantic tenders. Some of the 282 locomotives and Atlantics came with a new plastic tender. This was much more detailed than the old metal tender, and lasted through 1966, being used with many locomotives over the years.

The Atlantic locomotives were converted to plastic boilers, although some of the first 1952 models still had the metal boiler. These can be distinguished from the 1951 model by the absence of the "AC" suffix.

The 315 K-5 locomotive was finally produced after being prematurely listed in 1951. There are two versions of this locomotive. Most of them have the older four wire connection between the tender and the locomotive. Some of the 315's have the newer fine wire connection which allows the smoke unit and light to be on when the locomotive is in a neutral position.

A new diesel locomotive was introduced in 1952. It was the "Silver Streak" Alco PA with one motor and an air chime whistle. Strangely, the first dealer's catalog listed this locomotive as a Burlington locomotive. Why this was changed is not known. The "Silver Streak" was



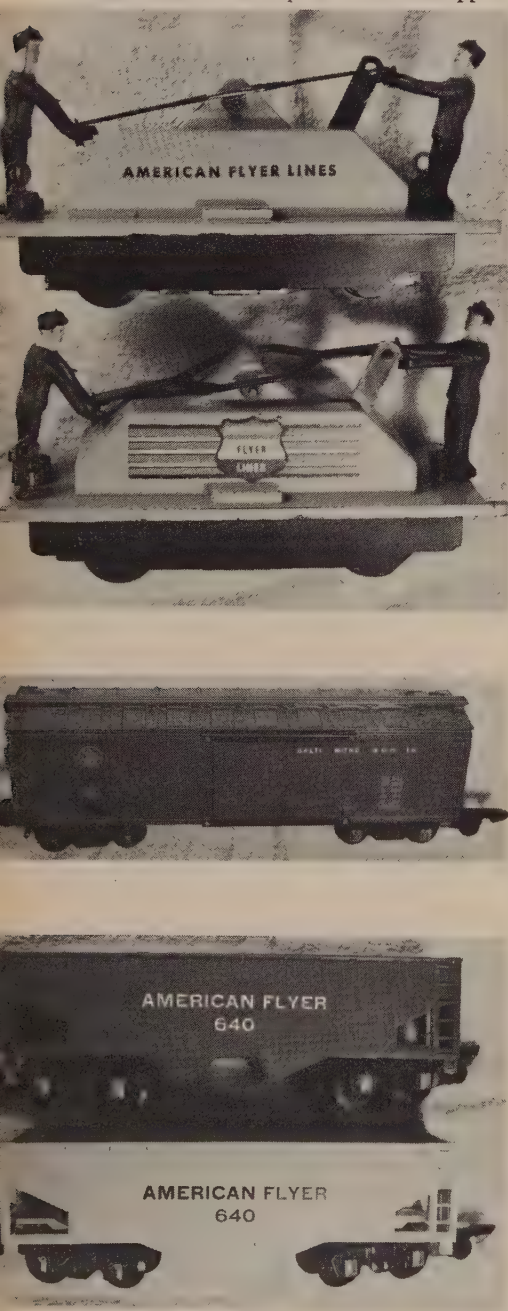
Early style knuckle couplers.



cataloged with the new plastic streamlined passenger cars. It was the only streamlined passenger set ever cataloged with no observation car. These cars had the same numbers (No. 660, No. 661, No. 662) as the aluminum passenger cars. The finish was a vacuum chrome plating. Also cataloged and photographed was the No. 663 plastic observation.

To date, this car is not known to exist. A similar car was made but with a different number and finish. It was a No. 503 painted silver observation. There are the No. 500 Combine, No. 501 Coach and No. 502 Vista Dome to match the No. 503. The No. 500 and

TOP. Handcars for '52; BELOW. 633 B&O reefer. BELOW. Gray and white hoppers.



No. 502 cars also exist in the bright chrome finish. The 500 series cars were never listed, although they were shown in the 1952 catalogs. Since the No. 501 coach is more scarce than the other three, it is thought that the Santa Fe passenger set No. 5108W from 1952 contains the No. 500, 502, 503 cars. This has not been verified, however.

#### HAND CAR

The No. 740 Hand car made its first appearance in 1952. There are two versions of this. The first just had "American Flyer Lines" in one horizontal line. The second had the American Flyer shield and stripes. Neither version had the vent holes in the top of the hand car body. That was a 1953 improvement.

Several new freight cars and accessories were made in 1952. The No. 766 Animated Station with operating coach was new. It consisted of a vibrating platform and a No. 735 Coach with people that moved around quite similar to the stockyard and car brought out in 1950. Its common nickname among collectors is the "People Loader."

The refrigerator car made its first catalog appearance in the No. 647 Northern Pacific car. It was photographed as one solid color rather than orange with brown roof and ends. This was probably just a pilot model.

Other reefers were made but not cataloged. The No. 633 B&O car was made as both a brown and a red reefer. They are very scarce. The No. 639 American Flyer car was made as a cream-colored reefer, which is also somewhat unusual.

Another new car was the No. 648 Track Cleaning car. This had four felt pads. The first two were to be saturated with the New No. 27 Track Cleaning Fluid. The last two pads were to wipe up the liquid after cleaning. However, the result was usually wet track.

The series of wooden buildings

made by Minicraft was new for 1952. They included the No. 270 News and Frank Stand, the No. 271 3-piece "Whistle Stop" set, the No. 272 "Glendale Station," the No. 273 Suburban Station, the No. 274 "Harbor Junction" freight station, and the No. 275 "Eureka" Diner. All of these came in many color and detail variations.

#### TRESTLE BRIDGE

The No. 753 Single Trestle Bridge with rotating beacon was new. This was much longer than the No. 750 Bridge with house. The No. 754 Double Trestle Bridge gained the rotating beacon for 1952. It previously had a red warning light.

The 17B and 19B transformers were the first big change in transformers since World War II. These had a new "dead man" control which automatically stopped the train if you let go of the handle. This was only true if the handle was not snapped down all the way. Pulling the handle up was the only way to cut the power to the track. This was to keep the reverse unit from dropping out when the throttle was turned down.

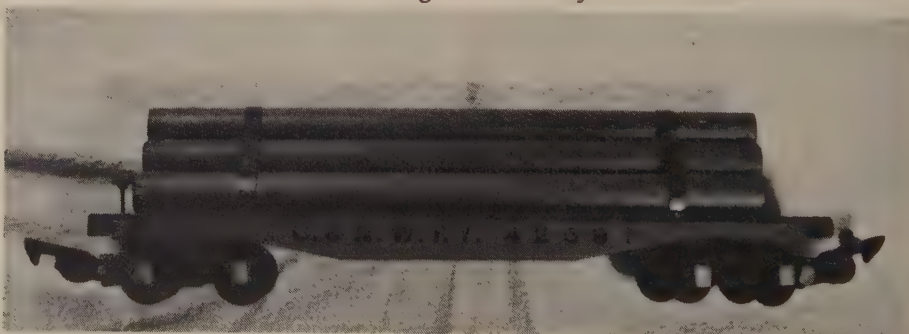
Some of the flat cars appeared with pressed wood chassis. Among them the No. 628 Log car, the new No. 928 Log car, the No. 643 Circus Flat car, and the No. 636 Depressed Center car with reel. The No. 928 Log car came with large or small lettering.

The 625 Gulf Tank car gained the suffix "G" becoming "625G." Some of the 632 LNE and 640 American Flyer Hopper cars came in a white plastic. They are fairly uncommon.

The No. 26 Service Kit and the No. 731 Pike Planning Kit were added to the line of accessories.

The 650 Series New Haven coaches came with sheet metal chassis instead of the diecast ones. This included the No. 649 Circus Pullman.

The No. 717 Log car was re-listed after a one year absence. It hasn't been determined if they made some more or just found some old stock.



628 pressed wood log car.



1953

# Couplers undergo broad change

In 1953 American Flyer made a broad change to knuckle couplers: only seven of the 24 regular cataloged sets still had the link couplers. These were the lower priced sets.

Most cars were available separately with either link or knuckle couplers. There are some interesting exceptions to this, however. The new 924 Cement Hopper was also listed in the early catalogs with link couplers as 624. This car was not produced. Other cars not made with link couplers were the new CB&Q hopper, the Pullman combine and the Pullman observation.

There were a few cars that were only cataloged with link couplers in 1953. Among them were the 732 Operating Baggage car, the 632 LNE Hopper, the 643 Circus Flat car and the 650 New Haven coach. However, I have a 732 baggage car with knuckle couplers that probably is a factory original. Some cars with sheet metal trucks were converted to knuckle couplers at the factory. This was the same type of conversion made with the number 520 Knuckle Coupler Conversion Kit introduced in 1954. A few 919 CB&Q coal dump cars exist with link couplers.

## TRANSITION YEAR

Being a year of transition, some odd things were produced. Steam locomotives that gained knuckle couplers also gained "Pull-Mor" wheels and new numbers. Pull-Mor wheels were rubber tires on two of the drivers, usually the rear, but sometimes on the front. The new numbers included 316, 326, 336 and 343. The locomotives ending

in "6" also included the "Air Chime Whistle."

An exception to this was the new 356 "Silver Bullet" locomotive and tender. This was a streamlined locomotive similar to the "Royal Blue" and circus locomotive. There were two major changes in this locomotive as compared with the earlier Royal Blue type. The boiler was plastic instead of metal and it had "Smoke and Choo Choo" added, which moved the smoke stack forward. It still had the earlier style link couplers. The "Silver Bullet" was made with a bright chrome finish and was cataloged with two new 655 "Silver Bullet" passenger cars. Some sets came with a dull silver paint finish, and some came mixed with chrome engines and silver cars.

At least two uncataloged sets came with the new 356 Silver Bullet loco. One of them was a work train with the new 606 Crane and 607 Work Caboose. The other set was a freight train with the new 642 Seaboard Box car, the new 605 Log car and a 638 Caboose.

The New Haven style 4-6-2 steam locomotive was re-introduced after a year's absence and became 293. The 301 Atlantic was finally made after being cataloged, but not made, in 1956. The new 301 had a plastic boiler with "Choo Choo" only in the locomotive. It came with a link coupler.

## COMET INTRODUCED

Several new diesel locomotives were introduced in 1953. The three of them were the 466 "Comet" in blue and chrome, the 474-475 "Rocket" in green and chrome and the 477-478

"Silver Flash" in brown and chrome. These locomotives were not given prototype roadnames for some unknown reason. However, the paint schemes supposedly followed prototype schemes. The "Comet" was like the Missouri Pacific. The "Silver Flash" probably was the Maine Central. The "Rocket" isn't quite clear. It might have been something like the Rock Island scheme.

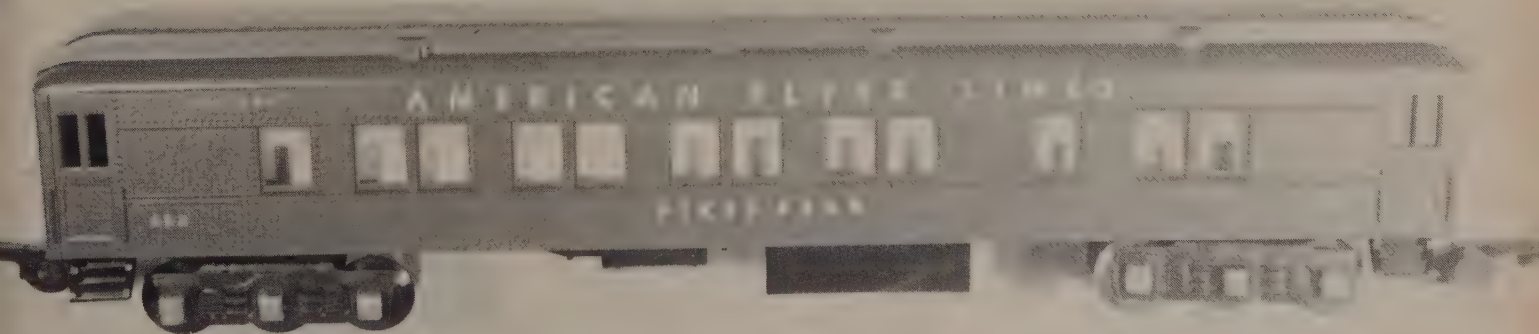
The Santa Fe diesel became three units and was also given the chrome finish to complement the red paint job. It was an A-B-A 470-471-473.

The other new diesel was the 375 GM GP-7. This was similar to the 370 Diesel except it had the new knuckle couplers and a built-in air chime whistle. This loco was not cataloged in a set and apparently was produced in small quantities.

Some of the other new cars introduced in 1953 were the 609 Girder car, the 613 and 913 Great Northern Box cars, the 622 and 922 GAEX Box cars, the 620 and 920 Southern Gondolas, the 641 and 941 Frisco Gondolas and the 640 and 940 Wabash Hoppers. The 655 red and 655 green Unlighted Coaches and the 623 Illinois Central Reefer car were new with link couplers only, but came with knuckle couplers the following year.

The 652 twelve-wheel Pullman gained the "Pikes Peak" name and came in green and at least four versions in red. The new 952-953-954 series Pullmans were shown in the catalog as having opening and sliding doors like the earlier 652 series cars.

The No. 652 received the "Pikes Peak" name in 1953.





Most of them did not come this way, although a green 953 and a green 954 with opening and sliding doors exist. These might have been original samples. The trucks on these two cars are also somewhat different.

The streamlined passenger cars gained knuckle couplers and individual names. Most of them were bright chrome. Late in the year, some were made with a dull silver paint job.

The hand car introduced in 1952 was now offered as a set with three ore tipple cars, track and transformer. It was also offered with a newly-designed tool shed as set number 741.

#### FIGURE SET

Some of the new accessories for 1953 were the 34 Railroad Figure Set,



ABOVE. The rare 500-series streamline cars.

the 50 District School and the 759 Bell Danger Signal. Nine new wooden buildings were added to the line. They were the 160 Station Platform, the 161 Bungalow, the 162 Factory, the 163 Flyerville Station, the 164 Red Barn, the 165 Grain Elevator, the 166 Church, the 167 Town Hall and the 168 Hotel. These were made by "Mini Craft" and sold by Gilbert. Some of these are fairly scarce because some of the delicate wooden parts didn't survive abuse.

The No. 34 Figure Set for 1953.



Inclined track layouts could be made with the new abutment and trestle sets. The 781 and 782 Abutments were made to resemble cement pillars. The 780 Trestle Set was made to resemble steel girders.

An uncataloged 790 "Train-O-Rama" was produced in 1953. This was a three dimensional cardboard backdrop for a layout. The new dual control 18B and 30B transformers with "Dead Man's Control" were made.

Nos. 953 and 954 with opening doors.





# 1954 T&P GP-7 enters line in 1954

In 1954 American Flyer equipment with link couplers made its last appearance. Only the operating cars and the track cleaning car were still cataloged with link couplers. All cataloged sets now had the new knuckle couplers.

One locomotive was produced with link couplers in 1954. This was the uncataloged No. 299 Reading Atlantic, which did not follow the basic number series. The 290 type locomotives were New Haven style diecast Pacifics. The 299 was basically the same as the 1953 model 300 Atlantic except the reverse unit was in the tender. It is also about the same as the 307 Atlantic introduced in 1954 except that the 307 had knuckle couplers. If the 299 came in a set, there would be others still available with link couplers in 1954. I have not seen this locomotive in a set as it is a bit uncommon.

The 1953 lower-priced locomotives with link couplers gained new members in 1954 with the addition of knuckle couplers. The 302 became 303; the 282 became 283; the 356 became 354. This again was not in accordance with the basic number series. The 370 became 371.

Among the new locomotives for 1954 was the 287 C&NW Pacific. It was the same as a 283 locomotive except it didn't have Smoke and Choo Choo.

## TEXAS & PACIFIC

Another new engine was the two-unit Texas & Pacific GP-7 which was red and black with a T&P decal on each side of the cab. The sides were marked "American Flyer Lines." The power unit was No. 375 and was equipped with a horn. The dummy unit was No. 374 and was lighted only. This was the first and only time that the power unit had a higher number than the dummy unit. By rights, the power unit should have been No. 373 since No. 375 was used previously for a Silver GM switcher.



The rare Celanese Chemicals car.

The 374-375 locomotives still had the sheet metal chassis as used on earlier GP-7 locomotives.

The Alco PA diesels made a change from bright chrome to a painted silver finish. The passenger cars that went with them made a similar change but gained a matching color stripe across the windows. The Santa Fe came with red stripe cars, the Rocket with green stripe cars, the Comet with blue stripe cars and the Silver Flash with brown stripe cars. Brown was called chocolate in 1953. Now it is called chestnut. Perhaps someone felt it wasn't dark enough to be called chocolate. The Silver Flash set came with only three brown stripe cars: the combine, coach and observation. The Vista Dome was available in an Atlantic set which also had the combine and observation. It was the first and last time an Atlantic was cataloged with streamlined passenger cars.

The earliest catalog for 1954 (slick paper No. D1746) listed the streamlined cars separately in the back and showed the Hudson and Northern with color striped passenger cars. The blue stripe 961 coach was listed, but apparently not produced.

## GILBERT CHEMICAL

There were several new cars, the most interesting one being the No. 910 Gilbert Chemical car. This was avail-

able only by separate sale, not in sets. It was originally planned to be Celanese Chemicals; however, A.C. Gilbert himself decided to change it to Gilbert Chemicals. Several samples apparently were made before the changeover was ordered. Only one is known to exist at this time.

Two other new cars, both uncataloged, were the 928 New Haven Log car and the 934 Southern Pacific Floodlite car.

Other new numbers because of coupler change were the 942 Seaboard Box car, the 923 Illinois Central Reefer, the 905 — 906 — 907 — 909 Flat and Work cars, the 938 Caboose, and the 955 Passenger Coaches.

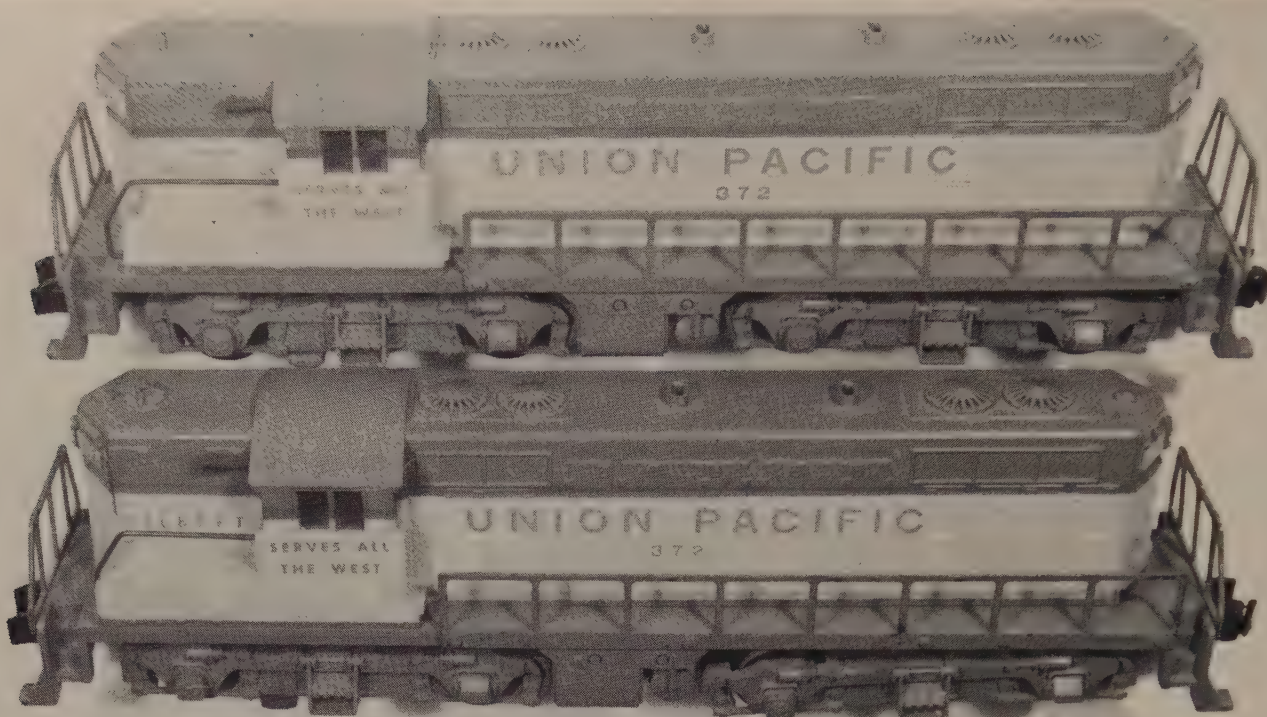
The 734 Operating Box car was made with "American Flyer Lines" which is not as common as the earlier "American Flyer" 734.

Some of the new accessories for 1954 were the No. 600 Crossing Gate with Bell and the No. 783 High Trestle Set to add to the No. 780 Graduated Set of 1953. The new station series was introduced. The Union Station with two lites was No. 794. The Terminal shed was No. 792. A combination of the station and terminal shed was No. 795. A new talking Union Station was No. 799. On these stations, the tower unit with entrance was moveable so that it could be placed on a side or end. These stations and sheds were quite similar in design to ones produced by "Many Ways" around 1940.

Uncataloged 299 locomotive.







Union Pacific with *Made by American Flyer* and *Built by Gilbert* stamped near cab.

## 1955 Diesel roar new in 1955

**A**merican Flyer introduced its diesel "roar" in 1955. This was a unit which simulated the sound effects of a real diesel engine. "From a standing start in the station to full throttle on the main line, all the variety of pulsating big-motor sounds are faithfully reproduced," read the Gilbert advertisements.

A vibrator was mounted in the Alco B unit and wired to the horn speaker. The vibrations increased and became louder with an increase in voltage. With a little imagination, it does sound pretty good. However, after a few minutes of this, the noise can get on your nerves. For this reason, a cut-off switch was installed on the bottom of the B unit.

### NEW B UNITS

Three new Alco B units were listed for separate sale in 1955, each containing the new diesel "roar" feature.

These were the 467 Comet B unit, the 476 Rocket B unit, and the 480 Silver Flash B unit. Of these, only the 480 was mass produced. The 467 and 476 were made only in small quantities as samples and promotion items.

The Santa Fe 471 B unit which came with two "A" units also had the diesel "roar."

The steam whistle was improved in 1955. It had the new 710 variable tone control and rather than pushing a button to get a single tone, it had a sliding spring-loaded switch. Locomotives that came with this were the 326 Hudson, 336 Northern, 346 Switcher and the uncataloged 296 New Haven Pacific. This was the first and only year that the 0-8-0 switcher came with a whistle.

Because the tender of the 346 Switcher had a whistle, a new type three-position reverse unit was

mounted on the rear of the motor in the locomotive cab. This reverse unit did not work as well as the regular unit and many were converted to the later two-position reverse unit brought out in 1957.

The 343 Switcher was not cataloged in 1955, but was made for some uncataloged sets. It can be distinguished by the small, round hole in the center of the tender chassis. It also has the three-position reverse unit in the cab.

### UNION PACIFIC GP7

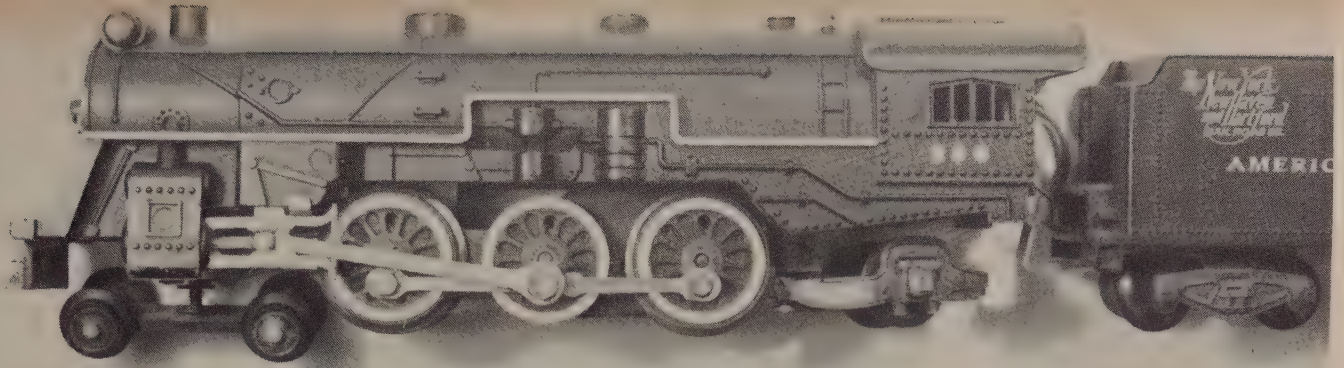
A new GP7 diesel locomotive was introduced in 1955. It was the yellow and gray 372 Union Pacific. There are two versions of this locomotive; one has "Made By American Flyer" and the other has "Built By Gilbert." Both versions appeared the first year and differ in color from the later 1956-57 versions. The gray was much lighter in 1955.

The GP7 diesel had a new frame for 1955 and was diecast metal instead of stamped sheet metal. The 374-375 Texas and Pacific diesels also had the new chassis.

LEFT. No. 480 Silver Flash B unit with diesel "Roar."







Uncataloged 296 locomotive.

There were other changes made in locomotives. The "Silver Flash" diesel went from a twin motor A&B unit to a single motor A unit Number 479, and was only available in a freight set.

The Santa Fe A-B-A changed from "American Flyer Lines" on the side and "Chief" on the nose decal to "Santa Fe" on both. Some of the 1955 units came with a black-and-white Santa Fe sticker under the side cab window. Another variation that appears on some of the Santa Fe A units is the "Santa Fe" lettering on the side with all seven letters equally spaced, commonly known as the "San-Tafe" version.

The Pennsy K-5 Pacific lost its whistle and changed from 316 to 313. The hand car gained a reverse unit which changed its direction when it bumped into anything. The new number was 742.

#### NEW CARS

Some of the new cars for 1955 include the green stripe combine and coach to match the Rocket passenger set. The 911 C&O Pipe car, the 912 Koppers Chemical car with platform, the 916 D&H Gondola with canisters, and the 926 Three-dome Gulf Tank car were new. These four cars were sold as car assortment Number One. This was the first year any car assortments were offered. Car Assortment Number Four was an interesting one. It contained the green 951, 952, 953, 954 passenger cars. These contained silhouetted people in the windows, as did all the passenger cars for 1955. This was also the last year that the 12-wheel Pullmans were cataloged in complete train sets, although they were produced through 1958.

The action caboose made its first appearance with the 977. The 1955 models came with a metal man who leaned out whenever the train stopped. As the train resumed its trip, he returned to the platform. There are two different caboose body variations

on the 977. They can be distinguished by the door knobs on the end. The left hand ones are early, and the right hand ones are late.

Another interesting caboose for 1955 was the uncataloged 934. It is unusual because this number had previously been assigned to a searchlight car. It is identical to a 938 caboose with the exception that it had two couplers.

One car that made a change was the 915 Unloading car, which was now gray and maroon and came with a Renwal gasoline truck. Previous to 1955, it had been black, red and yellow with a Tootsietoy racer.

Two other cars that changed were the 936 Depressed Center Reel car and the 974 Operating Box car. The 936 changed from "Erie" to "Pennsylvania" and the 974 changed from "American Flyer Lines" to "Erie."

#### ACCESSORIES

American Flyer did not skimp on accessories in 1955. There were no less than seven new accessories introduced. Among them were the 787 Log Loader, which uses the small logs, and the 785 Coal Loader, which dumps coal to a track beneath it. The operation of both of these was otherwise quite similar to their older counterparts.

The new 779 Oil Drum Loader was the smoothest operating accessory American Flyer made. It had a red three-wheel truck piloted by "Louie the Loader" who picked up oil drums on one side and moved them to trackside where he dumped them into a gondola. It was a very popular item.

The 571 Truss Bridge with arched sides was new. It was made in a total of three colors over the years: red, black and orange. Also new was the 561 Billboard horn and the 590 Control Tower. The tower was just a Bachmann piece painted and lighted. The name boards were metal instead of plastic.

The last new accessory was the 784 Hump Set which included track, a switch, six trestles, an uncoupler and a bumper. It made its only appearance in 1955. One interesting thing about the hump set was that it included either a right or a left switch, but the box was not marked to indicate this.

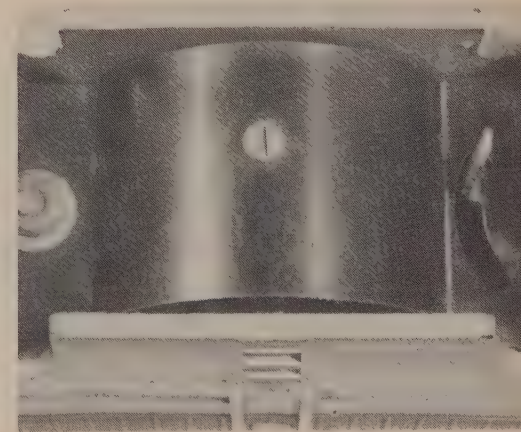
The earliest of the variations of the D1782 dealer catalog shows the set which is shown with the hump set as the featured set for 1955. The four known variations of D1782 suggest replacing the Northern with an 0-8-0 switcher and then dropping the set entirely and making diesel roar the featured item.

The 793 Union Station was identical to the earlier 794 Station, except that it did not include the two street lamps.

The 566 Metal Billboard made its last appearance, but with a new picture. It now showed a New York Central Hudson locomotive.



TOP. The 710 steam whistle control. BOTTOM: "Roar" cutoff switch on Alco B unit.







Two versions of the No. 499 loco; note step holes on top model.

## 1956 Colorful items offered in 1956

American Flyer introduced many new colorful items in 1956. Among these was a new Baldwin diesel switcher locomotive number 355 in Chicago and Northwestern green and yellow. This was a very popular locomotive, but it never was a good-running piece. The motor didn't hold up too well and ran too hot. This problem of overheating was never corrected even though the Baldwin diesel was produced for five years.

Another new locomotive for 1956 was the 499 New Haven electric in orange, black and white. This was the only electric type locomotive that American Flyer made in S gauge. It was equipped with two pantographs to pick up current from overhead wires, and could be wired to do so. It had a motor identical to the Alco PA diesel and contained an electronic whistle.

Initially, Gilbert had planned to put metal steps on the sides of the

locomotive. The photo in the catalog shows holes but no steps. Some of the first locomotives were produced with the holes but are fairly scarce. It was pictured in the catalog with black trucks, although they were produced with silver trucks. This locomotive is also known to exist in a dull black rather than shiny black.

### NEW HAVEN PA

Also new for 1956 were three new road names on the Alco PA diesels. The first of these was a double "A" New Haven 494-495. This had two motors, "diesel roar," a horn and was painted similar to the New Haven electric. It was available with either a freight or a passenger set. The passenger set was a set of four silver streamlined cars with orange stripes to match the locomotive.

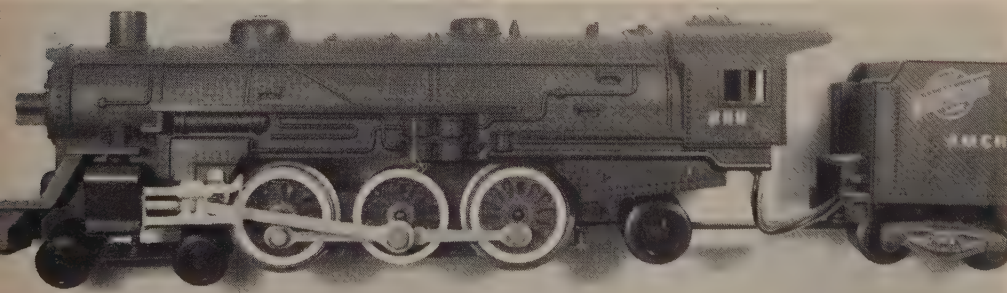
Another new road name was the Santa Fe freight A-B-A in blue, yellow and black. Of course, Santa Fe never painted any of their Alco PA diesels in

freight colors, but it looks good on the model. The numbers were 484-485-486. The "B" unit had diesel roar and a horn.

The third new road name for the Alco was the North Coast Limited scheme of the Northern Pacific Railroad. This was two-tone green with white stripes and lettering. It came as an A-B-A set. To match the locomotives, a set of streamlined passenger cars was made. The cars were a 900 combine, a 901 coach, a 902 vista dome and a 903 observation. This is the first time that a set of streamlined cars was given a special paint scheme other than silver cars with a colored stripe. The only apparent variation in these cars for 1956 was the size of the number in the windows. The earliest of these had a larger number than the later ones. Set 5685RH consisted of the Northern Pacific 490-491-493 A-B-A and five passenger cars, including two 902 vista domes. This was the longest passenger set AF ever made.

Several new locomotive numbers were made in 1956. The Santa Fe passenger locomotive was available as a single unit 472. This came in a set with three red stripe cars: the coach, vista dome and observation. It is the only Santa Fe streamlined set Gilbert made that did not come with a combine. The Silver Flash single A unit now had the diesel roar and horn and was numbered 481. This was the only locomotive so equipped.

Uncataloged No. 289 locomotive.





The Texas and Pacific twin GP-7 also gained the diesel roar which was put in the dummy unit with the horn. The power unit was 377 and the dummy was 378.

It is interesting to note that in the photographs in the 1956 consumer catalog, the diesel trucks were often shown in the wrong colors. The cover photos show the Northern Pacific diesel and the New Haven electric with black trucks. These were produced with silver trucks only. The 372 Union Pacific on page 11 was shown with silver trucks, but was produced only with grey. In the earlier black and white catalog, the New Haven and Santa Fe freight units were shown with black trucks. The 372 Union Pacific was shown with a black frame and silver trucks in this catalog.

#### UNCATALOGED 4-6-2

An uncataloged C&NW 4-6-2 was produced in 1956. It was number 289 and was equipped with a whistle but no Choo-Choo or smoke—it was the only time a steam locomotive came equipped this way. It is identical to a 287 with the addition of a whistle. It came with three freight cars of the new 800 series in set number 1153 and sold for \$24.95. It also had the 710 Whistle Control, which had been brought out the previous year. The three cars were the brown N&W gondola and the 806 AFL caboose. The other new cars in this series were the black 801 B&O hopper, the orange 802 Illinois Central reefer and the 805 Pennsylvania gondola. These cars differed from the regular 900 series in that they were bare plastic, not painted.

The Reading Atlantic now came as Number 308 with Choo-Choo only, no smoke. The 303 was also made with smoke and Choo-Choo.

The 313 Pennsy K-5 now was equipped with the large motor that had previously only been used in the 326 Hudson and 336 Northern.

The 954 red "Grand Canyon" observation gained the brakeman and became the 978 action observation. An interesting variation to this car is that some came with four steps instead of three. The left front corner has no door, but some of the 978 observations came with a step there.

Many new colorful freight cars were brought out in 1956. The most popular are the 980 series box cars and reefers. The 980 B&O box car was blue and orange. The 981 Central of Georgia box car was black and silver with a yellow

sticker. The earliest ones were dull black and are harder to find. The 982 State of Maine box car was red, white and blue. The 983 Missouri Pacific box car was blue, gray and yellow. The 984 New Haven box car was orange with black and white lettering. The 988 American Reefer was orange with silver roof and ends and had red, white and blue stickers. In the early catalog, the 988 was shown with brown roof and ends. The 989 Northwestern reefer was green and yellow with a sticker that came in two different shades of yellow.

#### NORTHWESTERN REEFER

Most people make the mistake of calling the 989 reefer "Chicago & NorthWestern" but it is really the "Northwestern Refrigerator Line Company" which is not affiliated with the Chicago & NorthWestern Railroad. Yours truly even made the mistake while compiling the checklist published by Ladd Publications. If you look close at the sticker, which looks like a C&NW herald at first glance, it says "Northwestern Refrigerator Lines."

The 928 New Haven lumber car was new. It differed from the uncataloged 928 New Haven log car in that it was now plastic and had metal stakes to hold flat pieces of lumber. This car comes with two different styles of lettering. In the advance catalog it is shown with plastic stakes similar to the tops of the brackets of the C&O pipe gondola car. It was not produced this way.

The 956 Monon piggyback car was new in 1956. It was gray with red lettering and carried two small trailers with advertisements of American Flyer trains. The advance catalog shows this car to be black with white lettering and carrying two different trailers, one "AF Trains" and the other "Erector."

Another new car was the operating 971 Southern Pacific lumber unloading car. It was red with yellow lettering but was shown in the advance catalog a light color with dark lettering.

The 970 Seaboard walking brakeman car and the 973 Gilbert operating milk car were new. The milk car was identical in operation to the 974 box car except that it had a light that went on when the man threw out a milk can. It came with a special platform to catch the cans.

The 904 caboose was just a new number for 1956. It was an unlighted "AFL" caboose with window inserts.

The 568 whistling billboard was new in that it now was plastic instead of metal. The 561 plastic billboard horn was called new this year although it was the same number as the earlier metal one. Both billboards had new pictures.

The 788 Suburban Station and the 789 Station with "Baggage Smasher" were introduced. The "Baggage Smasher" pushed a baggage cart back and forth on the station platform.

This was the only year that all three types of stations were made. The original 589 "Mystic" Station, the 793 Union Station and the new Suburban Station were all cataloged. For the first time a new record was made for the talking station. The 599 record had the trainman giving instructions for making up freight trains and a conversation between a conductor and control tower about hotbox trouble.

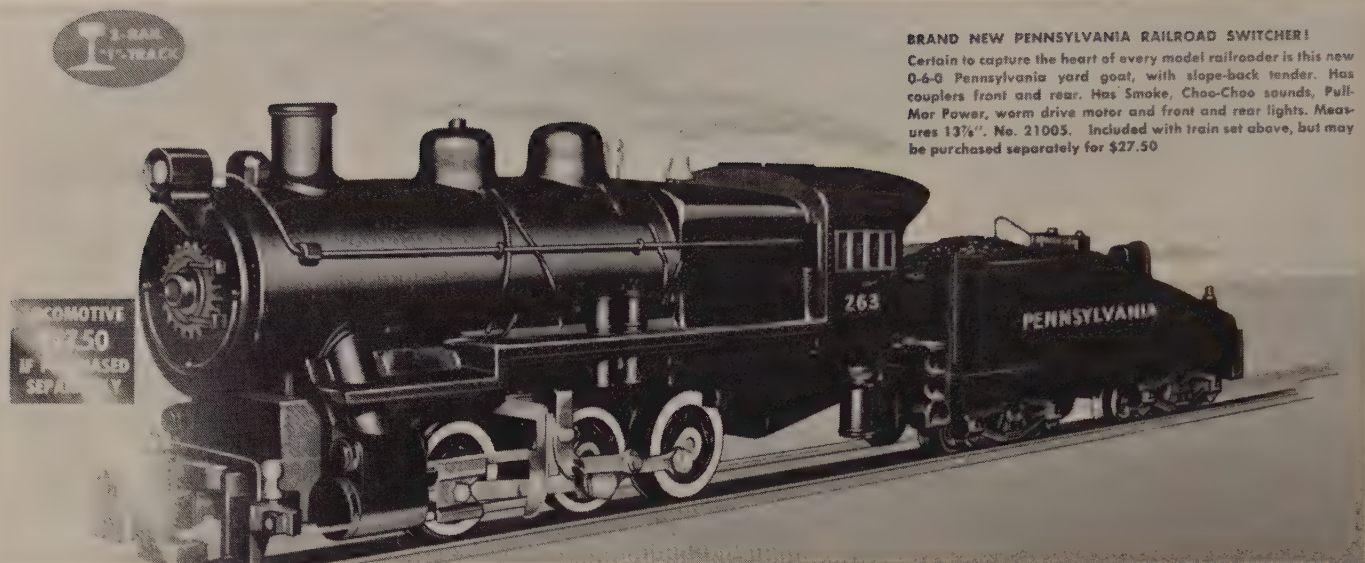
About the only other new item was the 728 re-railer which made putting cars on the track easier.

The first edition of the Dell Book on model railroading by Marshall McClintock was offered in 1955 in catalog D1882. The book was published by Dell and later as a Gilbert item as D1920.

#### Large and small number variations on NP cars.







**BRAND NEW PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD SWITCHER!**  
 Certain to capture the heart of every model railroader is this new 0-6-0 Pennsylvania yard goat, with slope-back tender. Has couplers front and rear. Has Smoke, Choo-Choo sounds, Pull-Mor Power, worm drive motor and front and rear lights. Measures 13 3/4". No. 21003. Included with train set above, but may be purchased separately for \$27.50

Catalog drawing of the new Pennsylvania 0-6-0 yard goat with slope-back tender.

1957

## New numbering system

The most interesting change for 1957 was the new numbering system. The five digit numbers made for easier inventory and cost accounting.

Although the catalogs listed all items as five digit, most were, in fact, still three digit.

The new numbering system, as originally set up, was quite elaborate. Each category stood for a different series of items. Basically, they were as follows: 20—were complete sets, 21—were locomotives, 22—were transformers, 23—were accessories, 24—were non-operating cars, 25—were operating cars, 26—were track, track accessories, and some parts, and 27—were replacement bulbs.

Elaborating further on the non-operating cars, the 240—were box and stock cars, the 241—were gondolas, the 242—were hopper cars, the 243—were tank cars, the 244—were refrigerator cars, the 245—were flat cars and work cars, the 246—were cabooses, the 247— and 248—were passenger cars and the 249—were car sets.

Most cars were given three different numbers for cost accounting. The higher of the three numbers was a car packaged for separate sale. The second number was assigned to a car packaged for a set, sometimes in a plain white box. The third and lowest

number was for a car packaged loose in a set.

As an example, the Illinois Central reefer was assigned numbers 24401, 24402 and 24403. Usually the higher of the three numbers was what actually appeared on the car, although not always. Occasionally an order would be sent to the production department for a car or locomotive to be packaged in a set. Not familiar with the system, they would actually put that number

on the car or locomotive. Two such instances were the 24537 New Haven pipe car and the 24547 Erie floodlite car. Both cars did not appear until 1958 as no cars, to my knowledge, were made with five digit numbers in 1957.

Car numbers ending in zero were not originally assigned. This meant that most cars were actually made with numbers ending in three, six or nine. Some uncataloged cars were

Two orange stripes; bottom one has plastic nameplate molded in.





given numbers ending in zero in 1958. The system of three numbers per car was abandoned by 1959 when many consecutively-numbered cars were introduced.

#### LOCOMOTIVE NUMBERS

The locomotives were all assigned five digit numbers, although only a few actually appeared with them. The C&NW 4-6-2 was made as No. 21084 in 1957. It is identical to the earlier 283 locomotive. It is interesting that the consumer catalog listed this locomotive as number 21015, although the dealer catalog listed it correctly.

An uncataloged Reading Atlantic was made that was number 21100 and had the new plug and socket connection between locomotive and tender.

A new type of steam locomotive was introduced in 1957. It was the Pennsylvania 0-6-0 switcher with slope-back tender. The catalog showed this as a 263 but listed it as a 21005. In fact, it was produced as 21004 the first year, although some very early locomotives were actually made as number 263. It is odd that the handmade sample of the 0-6-0 carries the number 21004.

Another locomotive reported to have been made with five-digit numbers in 1957 is the Pennsy K-5 number 21045. This has not as yet been authenticated.

The Northern Pacific Alco diesel now came as a Twin "A" 490-492 set and was available with a freight set or four-car passenger set. The 492 Dummy "A" had a horn and diesel roar. The 1957 diesel had a single rivet holding the steps on, as compared to the dual rivet 1956 models. There is an exception to this. The New Haven Alco was now a single unit single motor 497 and came with either single or dual rivets on the steps. It came with three orange stripe 960-961-963 cars. These differed from the 1956 production cars in that they didn't have the metal nameplates. The new cars were rubber stamped instead.

Some of the new cars for 1957 were the 807 white Rio Grande Box car, the 958 Mobilgas tank car and the 994 Union Pacific stock car.

The 957 Operating Erie Box car was more or less just a number change, although it did have a light, making it just slightly different from the 974 Erie Box car last made in 1955. The 957 was the only operating car to have its number on the control button. It also came with new aluminum barrels.

#### SPACE AGE

Gilbert entered into the "Space Age" with the introduction of the 969 rocket launcher car. This shot a plastic rocket vertically into the air by electric remote control.

The bay window caboose was new and came as number 935 or with the action trainman as number 979. This was modeled after an odd style that had only one or two prototypes on a midwest railroad. There were plans to make a similar caboose only without the bay window. A model was made and painted in a Burlington scheme but decided against in favor of the bay window—cupola type.

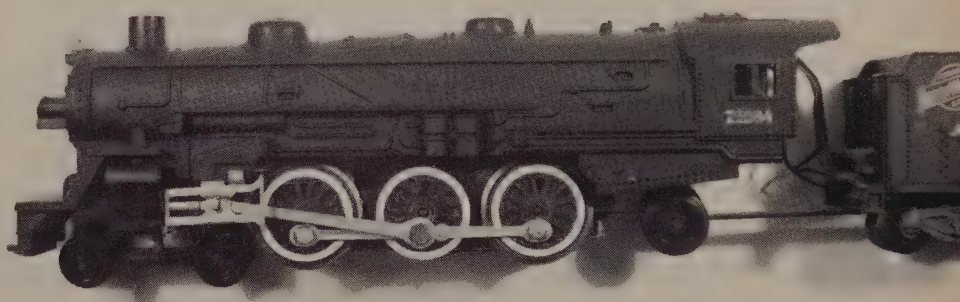
Two cars made major changes. The 914 Log Car went from painted grey to

plain aluminum. 1957 Tank cars can be found with either metal or plastic chassis or both.

Three new accessories were made in 1957. The talking station was now the later style suburban station introduced the year before.

The 23791 Cow-On-Track worked like a push-button semaphore. When the cow moved in front of the train it would stop. When it returned to its pasture, the train would resume.

The last new accessory was the 23796 Sawmill. It was a good operating accessory that stimulated cutting logs and then dumped the lumber into a waiting car.



TOP. One of the first 5-digit locomotives which is identical to the earlier No. 283 loco. BOTTOM. The No. 957 uncataloged operating box car.





1958

# Variety of items peaks

American Flyer hit its peak in 1958. This was the year of the most variety, color and new items. This was also the year most items were converted to the five-digit number system that had been introduced in 1957.

An all-new type steam locomotive was the 0-6-0 Docksider No. 21155. It was equipped with smoke and Choo Choo and operating couplers front and rear. It apparently had no particular prototype as no road name ever appeared on it.

New diesels included a double unit Baldwin in the Seaboard red and black color scheme. The power unit was 21918 and the dummy unit was 21918-1.

The C&NW Baldwin diesel became 21801 and differed from the earlier 355 in that it had the two-position reverse unit. The 21801 also came as a double unit in an uncataloged set number 20176. The dummy unit was 21801-1 and had no light.

## MANUAL REVERSE

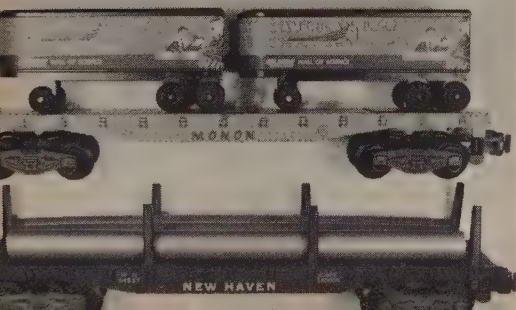
There were also two uncataloged manual reverse Baldwin diesels. The first was a 21808 C&NW unit which was identical to the 21801 with the exception of the reverse unit.

The second was a 21813 red and white Minneapolis & St. Louis unit.

24739 and 24733 cars.



24536 flat, 24537 pipe car.



This was sold with passenger cars and usually came in a two-train outfit. The passenger cars were streamline with red stripes and were also uncataloged. They were the 24867 combine, the 24869 coach and the 24868 observation. They did not have lights and were the only passenger cars to come in a set with a switcher locomotive.

The Texas and Pacific GP7 was now a single unit and was equipped with the two-position reverse that was standard equipment with all remote control locomotives. There were two versions of the 21831 T&P GP7. The earlier ones still had "American Flyer Lines" on the side which was a carryover from the double units of previous years. The later ones had "Texas & Pacific" as shown in the 1958 catalogs.

The Northern Pacific lost another unit and became a single unit 21551 with one motor. It still came with four passenger cars of the North Coast Limited scheme, but the new cars had no lights. The 21551 loco came with either metal steps or the new plastic steps which were molded into the body.

The 21561 New Haven diesel was new and also came with metal or plastic steps. It now had a dull black finish rather than the shiny finish of the earlier New Haven diesels, although one shiny example is known. It was uncataloged and apparently only came in freight sets.

One of the most colorful passenger sets AF made was the new Missouri Pacific Eagle. It consisted of a two unit Alco passenger diesel and four cars. The scheme was blue and silver with yellow stripes. The locomotive numbers were 21920 and 21920-1, and were also available with a seven-car freight set.

## LOCO CHANGES

Most of the steam locos made some changes for 1958. They all had the new quick disconnect plug and drawbar system. The reverse units were all in the locomotives since the new plug was only two conductor.

The Atlantic was now 21105 and still had the smoke and Choo Choo as the earlier 303 did. The drive wheels on a few of them were changed to a

new type, with plastic centers and metal rims. The chassis was also a new design. It was a "split" chassis that would allow the driver assemblies to come out with the removal of one screw.

An uncataloged, but very common Atlantic was the 21160 with manual reverse in the back of the cab. There are several versions of this locomotive. One unusual one has the earlier frame (before the "split" chassis) with a tapped hole in the bottom, apparently for mounting it on display. It has solid plastic drivers with painted whitewalls. This locomotive came in set No. 20161 and was called Simmons Display Set. The set consisted of the 21160 locomotive and tender with two Simmons refrigerator cars and a 24610 caboose. They planned and perhaps made a set No. 20151 called Simmons Special which I've never seen. This set was supposed to have two 24410 Illinois Central Reefers instead of the two Simmons cars. Maybe it was felt that if the set displayed had the Simmons cars, the other one should also. At any rate, I've never seen or heard of a 24410 Illinois Central Reefer. All of the freight cars with numbers ending in zero for 1958 had new solid knuckle couplers that did not uncouple. These were the 24110 Pennsy Gondola, the 24310 Gulf Tank car, the 24420 Simmons Reefer and the 24610 Caboose.

Most cars for 1958 were offered as five-digit cars, although many sets were put together using leftover three-digit cars from 1957. One car is not known to exist as a five-digit number for 1958. It is the 975 Action Observation that should have been 25039. I believe that the 25039 observation does exist as the other cars that it came with have all turned up as five-digit. The mail pick-up car, the "Niagara Falls" Pullman combine, the "Pikes Peak" Pullman, and the "Grand Canyon" observation were offered in a number 24963 car assortment or in a set number 20145 called the "Action Passenger Set." Normally, the four cars are 918, 953, 952 and 978 respectively. However, the first three cars are known to exist as 25005, 24739, and 24733, leaving only the 25039



Observation to turn up.

One 24733 "Pikes Peak" **Combine** is known to exist and there may be others. This would be considered a mistake rather than a variation. Gilbert has been known to make errors in production.

Several other locomotives made changes for 1958. The K-5 Pennsy locomotive was now 21115 and came with a plastic tender. The NYC Hudson made a similar change and became 21129.

The Pennsy 0-6-0 lost its tender light, gained a white stripe on the loco and became 21005. The New Haven electric lost its whistle and was now 21573.

#### 0-8-0

The Nickel Plate Road 0-8-0 was either 343 or 21145 for 1958 and both locomotives were identical except for number. This locomotive was cataloged with "The L-O-N-G-E-S-T Train Ever Made", the 20460 Yard King Special Freight Set. It came with a Figure Eight layout and 13 freight cars. The locomotive just missed the caboose at the crossing. A similar type set 20142 was made with a 21160 Atlantic locomotive and called the "Near Hit But Miss" set.

The New Haven 4-6-2 gained a whistle and became 21099. A 293 loco was also made in 1958 with a two position reverse unit on the back of the motor and the plug between the locomotive and tender. This would be the same as a 21099 except for the lack of a whistle. The same locomotive was made as number 21095.

One locomotive that hasn't shown up is the 21902 Santa Fe Passenger A-B-A in red and silver. This would be identical to the 470-471-473 set except for the new two position reverse unit. The Santa Fe Freight A-B-A became 21910, 21910-1, and 21910-2. Some of these came with the B unit numbered 21720 instead of 21910-1.

An interesting car that was planned but never produced was the 25055 Smoking Caboose. It was to be a red bay window type like the 935 and 979 introduced the year before. A sheet (D2080) was printed telling all about it. "It will be one of 1958's hotter items in any train line." Unfortunately, Lionel brought one out in 1958, but I don't know if this had anything to do with Gilbert cancelling theirs. Most of the sheets were cut up and bound into scratch pads so that even they are quite scarce.

The bay window cabooses did make some changes. The 935 became 24619, and the 979 changed to silver and became 25052. Another new caboose was the 24626 yellow and silver standard caboose. This was shown in a drawing on page nine of the 1958 catalog as number 24629, but apparently was never made that way.

#### OTHER NEW CARS

Other new cars are the 24419 Canadian National Reefer, the 24219 Western Maryland Hopper, the 24553 Rocket Transport Car, the 24543 Crane car, the 24216 Long Union Pacific Hopper car, 25049 Rio Grande Walking Brakeman car, and the 24549 Erie Floodlight car. A few of the floodlight cars were numbered 24547 and are very scarce. It is interesting that on the cover of the 1958 dealer catalog, this new floodlight car is shown as a New Haven car instead of Erie. Also on page nine of the same catalog is shown as much longer with six-wheel trucks. This was only an artist's conception.

Another new car was the 24539 New Haven pipe car. This one occasionally turns up as 24537.

Several cars just made some changes for 1958. The CB&Q coal dump car became 25025, and the door now hinged at the top instead of the bottom. The C&O pipe gondola changed to yellow lettering, gained a yellow stripe and became 24109. The depressed center floodlight car was a darker gray and the generator was now yellow instead of red. The catalog number was now 24529 but was never put on the car.

Last, but not least, on the new car list was the 24319 blue "Pennsylvania Salt" Chemical Tank car. It is quite attractive and was not produced in as large quantities as most cars. As a

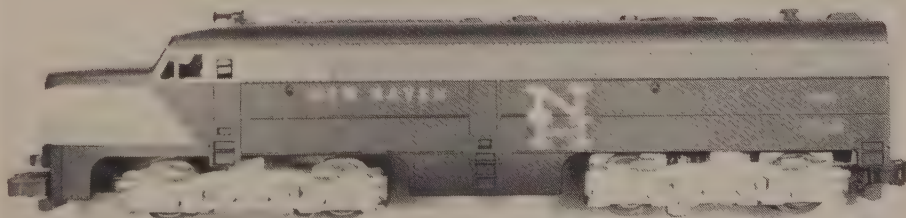
warning to collectors, this car has been reproduced and will probably be passed off someday as original. They are not marked as such, so be careful when buying one. The reproduction models are a shade lighter than the originals and not quite as smooth a paint job. Also, there are some differences in the lettering. In the original 24319 the "1" has a small serif at the top. The repro doesn't. Also the load limits on the repro below the number are much smaller (see picture on page 74).

Some cars that are fairly scarce because they are five-digit numbers instead of three-digit numbers are the 24016 MKT Box car, the 24409 Northern Pacific Reefer, the 24006 Great Northern Box car, the 24416 Northwestern Reefer, the 24519 Pennsylvania Flat car, the 24536 Monon Piggyback, the 25003 Log Dump car, and the 25005 Mail Pickup.

There were only a couple of new accessories for 1958. The 23780 Gabe the Lamplighter had Gabe climbing a ladder to the top of the tower and "lighting" the lights. It worked quite well. The other new accessory was a styrofoam 23040 Mountain, Tunnel and Pass which came in an uncataloged Sears Set No. 20147. The trestles with this set were unusual also. They were black ones that were identical to the earlier orange ones.

For the first time the consumer catalog was a full-color normal format catalog. An interesting version of this is an Eastern issue (D2047) that has a "W" on the cover to indicate Western prices which it doesn't have. Page 45 shows a 911 Gondola that is not in the standard D2047 and some of the colors are quite different. Another scarce catalog is the folder without any prices printed in it (D2088).

New Haven No. 21561 Alco with plastic steps.





In 1959 American Flyer cut its line to nine cataloged sets plus a new Frontiersman passenger set. There had been 18 sets cataloged in 1958. The A.C. Gilbert Company was celebrating its golden anniversary with "The Most Compact Train Line in American Flyer History."

Even though the line was small many new items were added. Probably the most important addition was the old-time Franklin passenger set. It consisted of a 4-4-0 locomotive and tender in black and green with red trim and two passenger coaches in yellow with black roofs. The set was No. 20550 and came with a circle of track and transformer.

As a limited offer promotion, a matching Overland Express car was given free with each set. Each Overland Express car was packed separately and had a special flap on the box which read: "Contents of this package not for re-sale. This is a free golden anniversary gift of the A.C. Gilbert Company in conjunction with your American Flyer dealer."

#### SEVERAL VERSIONS

There were several versions of the No. 30 (catalog No. 24730) Overland Express car the first year. The catalog shows it with the "Overland Express" herald on the right side and no "American Flyer Lines" on the left. The early production was similar to this only with the "American Flyer Lines" on the left.

Later it was reversed so that the Overland Express herald was on the left side. Late in 1959, the cars were changed from painted yellow to bare yellow plastic. A similar change was made on the pilots of the locomotives. The early production was painted red on black plastic and the later production was red plastic.

The first 50 sets produced were specially marked as "One of the First Fifty" on the outside and inside of the box plus on the tender. How these sets were distributed is unknown. A great number of 50th anniversary giveaway items bearing the image of the fron-

**American Flyer** COMPLETE MARKET COVERAGE

WITH THE **TOP LINE FOR '59!**

IT'S  
**9 FOR '59**



Most compact train line in American Flyer history makes it:

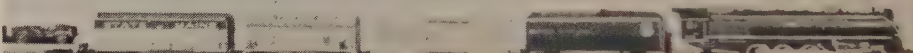
**EASIER** to buy  
**EASIER** to sell  
**EASIER** to distribute  
**EASIER** to stock

**1** TRAIN  
**1** TRACK  
**1** TRANSFORMER  
INCLUDED IN ALL 9 SETS!

**3**  
1. 2 RAIL TRACK  
2. REAL SMOKE & CHOO-CHOO SOUNDS  
3. PULL-MOR POWER

**Just One Gauge to Buy!**

**REMEMBER...** where there's smoke, there's **FLYER!**



It's 9 for '59; a page from the D2115 catalog of 1959.

## 1959 Frontiersman set celebrates golden anniversary

tiersman were produced. They include tie-clasps, cuff links, pencil sets and static displays.

Another new set for 1959 was the Union Pacific yellow and grey Pony Express passenger set. It was a twin Alco PA diesel 21925 and 21925-1 and four matching streamlined cars. The power unit had two motors; the dummy unit contained a new bell which worked only when the train was running slow.

#### BALDWIN DIESEL

The Baldwin diesel switcher was available in Texas & Pacific orange and black as number 21812, although

"812" is all that appeared on the locomotive. This was sold in the "Rambler" set 20510 with four freight cars. One of these was a new 24047 red Great Northern Box Car, which was only available in this set. Two other cars were new numbers, the 24322 Gulf Tank Car and the 24631 Yellow Caboose. Some of these sets come with an uncataloged caboose, number 24632.

The GP-7 diesel was made in blue and yellow Chesapeake & Ohio colors and came in The Defender set 20525. It included a new 24557 U.S. Navy Jeep transport, which carried two



Tootsietoy jeeps. Also included was the new 37th Division two-car rocket launcher and detonator box car set number 24056 in yellow. The cars plugged together so that they would operate at the same time. However, neither car would operate independently.

The Missouri Pacific Alco double unit was now 21922 and 21922-1 with the new bell and plastic steps instead of metal. It was available in the 20540 Merchandiser freight set, which included the new 24221 C&EI Grey Hopper, the new 24323 Baker's Chocolate Tank Car and the new 24077 Northern Pacific red and silver "Pig Palace" stock car.

The 21573 New Haven Electric was cataloged with a passenger set for the first time. It came with the orange stripe combine, vista dome, and observation in set 20520 The Bankers. The coach, which was not included, was offered separately as 24796 in the catalog, but has turned up as 24794.

The docksider locomotive was now 21156 and gained yellow safety stripes on the front of the steamchests, white stripes along the running boards and lost the smoke and Choo-Choo feature. It was sold in the Hotshot freight set, which included the new 24321 black Deep Rock Tank car and the 24627 Red Caboose, which was just a number change.

The Hudson changed from 21129 to 21130 and lost its whistle. It headed the Night Hawk 20530 freight set and featured the new 24558 Canadian Pacific Christmas tree flat car.

The Union Pacific Pathfinder 20545 set was supposed to contain the new 21140 4-8-4 locomotive, but instead still came with the 21139 locomotive with whistle made in 1958. Apparently, the 21140 4-8-4 was not produced until 1960. Included in the Pathfinder set were the new 24633 silver bay window caboose. This caboose was also included in the Night Hawk and the Merchandiser.

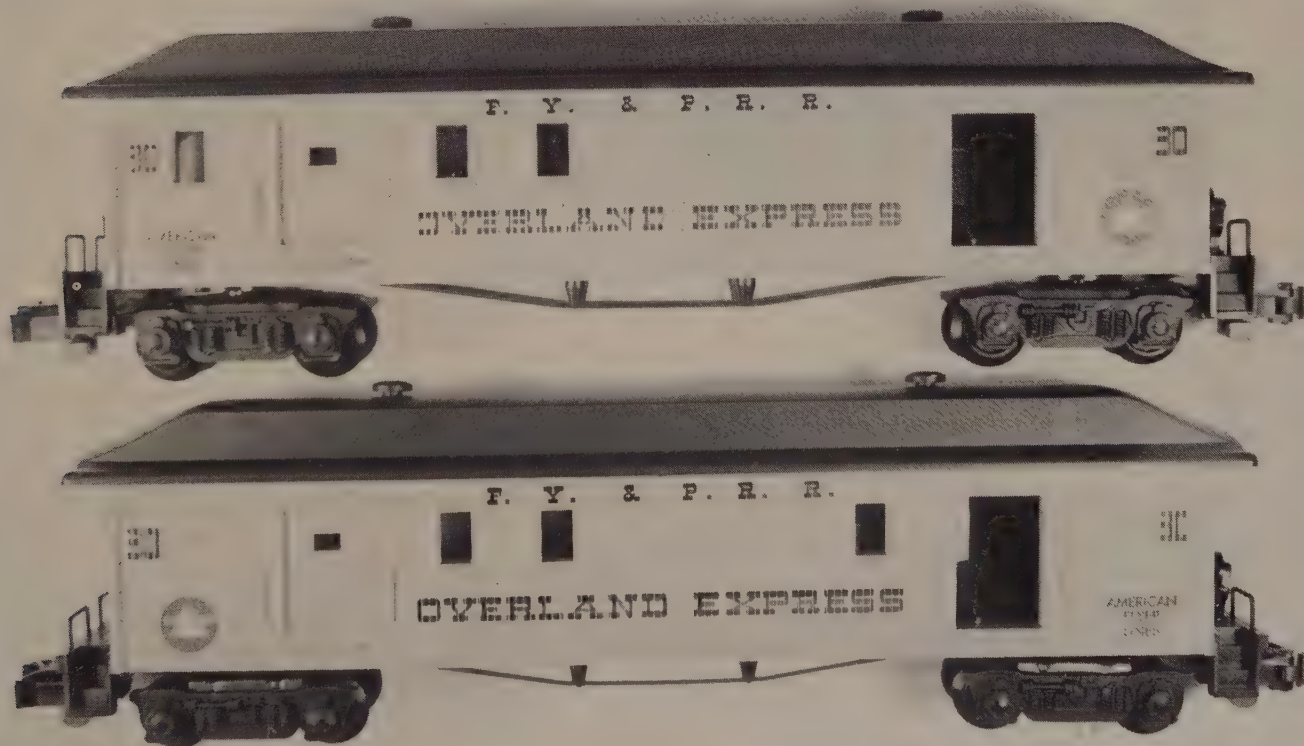
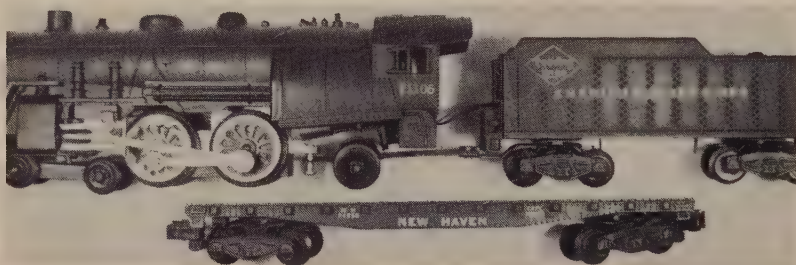
An interesting uncataloged set was made for Sears, Roebuck & Co. It contained an Atlantic 21106 with five freight cars including the New Haven flat car 24559. The set was number 20059 and carried the Sears number of 9992. Both numbers appeared on the set box.

Other new box cars included the 24556 Rock Island Wheel Transport, the 24561 Wrecking Crane and the 24550 Monon Piggyback car. The car was available separate or with the 23830 Piggyback unloader set.

There weren't many new accessories for 1959. A cheaper crossing gate 23601 was introduced which operated with a pushbutton rather than track trips. New fibre roadbed was made which only cost ten cents a section.

The consumer catalog was a single sheet folder in full color. The dealer catalogs were normal format, but in black and white and red, except for the full color cover. An interesting variation in the D2115 dealer catalog is that some have only two transformers UL approved and others have all four approved.

Overland Express versions; Sears set items.





1960

# Freight cars are new

Most of the new items for 1960 were freight cars, although there were several new locomotives and two new motorized units.

In the Frontiersman series, a new Washington locomotive and tender was introduced. It was identical in construction to the Franklin brought out in 1959. The colors were blue and gold rather than black and green. This locomotive was pictured in the catalog with a balloon stack but was only made with a funnel stack just like the Franklin. The Washington locomotive pulled a freight consisting of a Gold Belt Line box car No. 24055, a flat car with a metal cannon No. 24565, and a red old-time combine No. 24750. Only the last two digits of each number appear on the cars. The locomotive number is 21089, none of which appears on the locomotive.

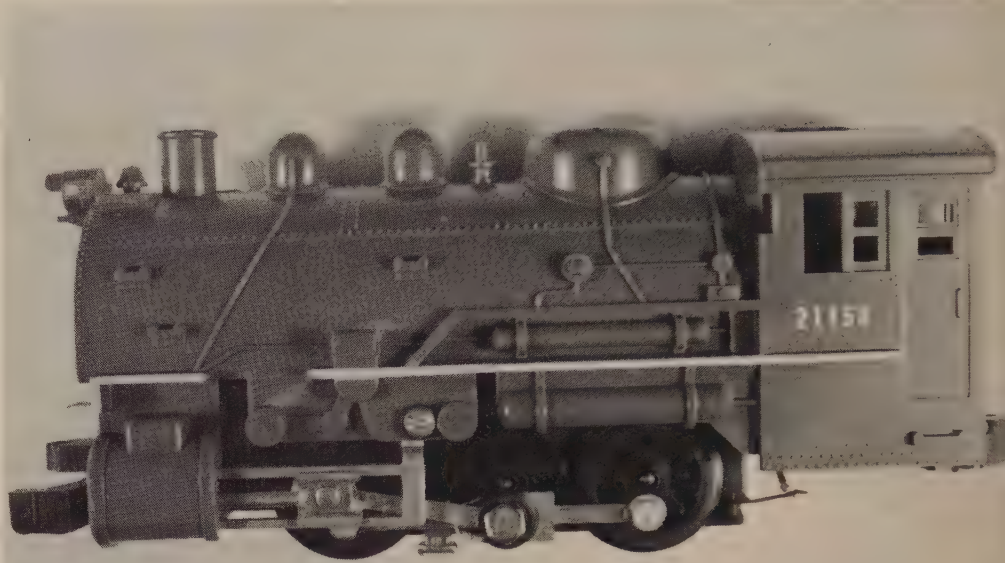
Some uncataloged Franklin sets were produced for the Truscott Company. It included the complete Franklin cataloged set, which had the new 24740 Combine, the 65 Cannon car and the 55 Box car. Also included were trestles, a station, a bag of cowboys and Indians, cardboard scenery, a Brownie Bullett camera, a roll of film and a packet of coupons to have the film developed. This was a promotion set sold through discount stores. The Truscott fiasco cost the A.C. Gilbert Company several hundred thousand dollars when the entire

**Traffic Master: never made.**



No. 23320 AMERICAN FLYER TRAFFIC MASTER

Route your trains the way dispatchers do on the big railroads! No matter how simple or elaborate your layout, from a basic loop to a multi-track set-up, your train can be sent from city-to-city, with its progress recorded on a big lighted control panel. Selective controls include Yard and Mainline, Railroad Line Selector and City Selector. \$14.98



The blue Dockside No. 21158, an uncataloged locomotive.

shipment to Truscott was legally siezed in Chicago as an asset against an unpaid bill to Encyclopedia Britannica and later sold at auction. The sets were available at many stores for about \$25.00.

## DOCKSIDER

Another new locomotive was the 21158 blue 0-6-0 docksider. This locomotive was not cataloged and was also sold with inexpensive sets through discount stores. It was similar to the 21156 from the previous year except it had only two pickups, one dummy coupler on the rear, no reverse unit and solid black drivers.

A new diesel for 1960 was the single motor Santa Fe 21927 red and silver passenger locomotive. It headed up The Chief set which included three red stripe streamlined cars.

Most of the streamlined cars were now held together with rivets instead of screws. The observation had a drumhead sticker on the back rather than the yellow plastic one that the light would shine through.

The Minneapolis & St. Louis set that was made in 1958 was brought out again in 1960. The cars were only changed as mentioned above. The locomotive lost the step ends, and the chassis was now blackened rather than aluminum.

The 21140 Union Pacific 4-8-4 that had been cataloged originally in 1959 was now available. It had plastic center drivers with metal rims. The tender had no whistle.

The only other new locomotive was the 21161 Atlantic which was never cataloged. It was a stripped down version which had no reverse unit, no light, no smoke or Choo Choo, no crossheads, and came with a solid knuckle coupler on the tender. Loose wires from the tender fastened to clips on the back of the locomotive cab. A special version of this locomotive was made for the Prestone Company and had their markings on the firebox sides. The sets in which these locomotives came consisted of a new 24030 yellow MKT Box car, a new 24564 New Haven Flat car with orange cardboard pipes, a new 24630 red Caboose, and either the new 24120 T&P Green Gondola or the 24130 red Pennsy Gondola. The 24564 Flat car and the 24130 Gondola do not have their numbers on them. The 24030 Box car and the 24130 Gondola are known to exist painted rather than bare plastic. All of these cars had the new integral plastic coupler and truck.

## MOTORIZED UNITS

For the first time in several years there were two new motorized units.



The first was the yellow 23743 Track Maintenance car. The other was a rocket sled car that ejected a pilot. It came with a No. 25515 U.S. Air Force Flat car to carry it. Both of these had the same Japanese motor that was to run on nine volts maximum.

An unusual version of the track maintenance car is the one with only the numbers 743 rather than 23743.

Some of the other new freight cars included the blue 24066 L&N Box car, the green 24065 NYC Box car, the red 24225 Santa Fe Hopper with load of stone, the red 24425 BAR Reefer, the orange and brown 24426 Rath Reefer, and the gray 24125 Bethlehem Steel Gondola with rail load. Some of the new flat cars were the black uncataloged 24540 New Haven, the black 24562 NYC with no load and only four stakes, the blue 24574 Rocket Fuel Transport, with containers and bulkheads, the 24575 Borden's Milk car, the 24577 Illinois Central Jet Engine Transport, and the 24579 Illinois Central Multi-purpose car with various loads.

Two new operating cars included the 25046 Rocket Launcher that set a rocket off at a 45 degree angle, and a 25057 exploding TNT Box car.

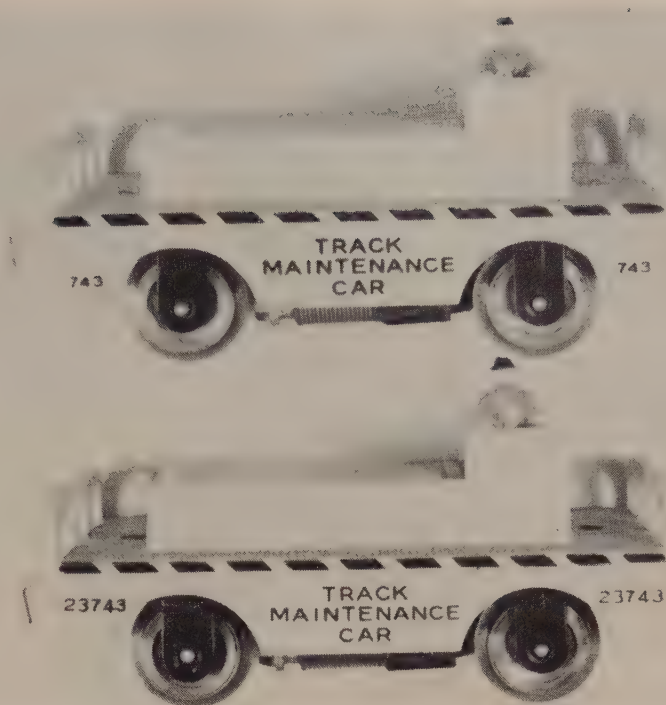
The tank cars changed in construction in 1960. The bottom of the tank and the chassis were now one piece. The ends were smooth and the hand-rails did not go around them. Included in this group are the 24313 3-Dome Gulf, the 24316 MobilGas Tank car, the new uncataloged 24320 DeepRock Tank car, the 24322 Gulf Tank car, the 24323 Baker's Chocolate car, and the 24325 Gulf Tank car. The only tank car made in 1960 that is not known to exist this way is the 24324 Hooker Chemical car.

#### KEYSTONE CAR

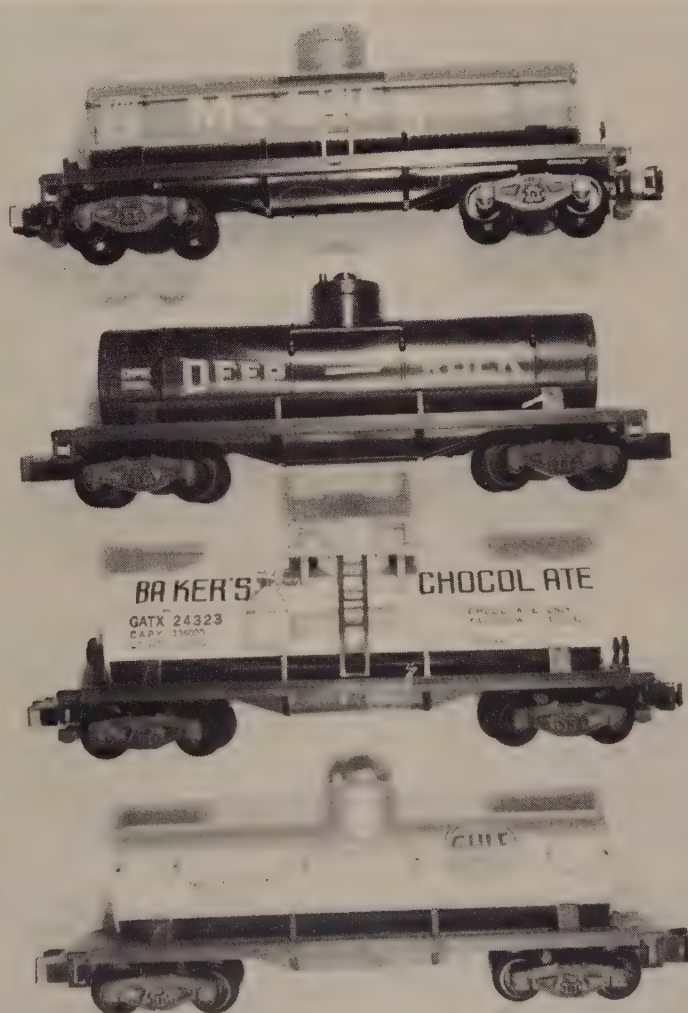
The only other new car was a box car that was made especially for the Keystone Camera Company. It was orange with black lettering and was assigned the number 24067 which did not appear on the car.

Most of the freight cars that were available for separate sale in 1960 came in clear plastic boxes with black ends. This was nice for display purposes.

The only new accessory planned was the 23320 Traffic Master. However, it was never produced and only appeared in the advance Dealer catalog No. D 2192.



TOP. No. 743 and 23743 maintenance cars. BOTTOM. 24316 Mobilgas, 24320 Deep Rock, 24323 Baker's Chocolate and 24325 Gulf tank cars with split tanks.







The (21) 234 C&O blue and yellow Geep 7 short step version.

1961

## Quality begins to decline

Gilbert lowered the quality of the American Flyer line in 1961 by introducing some new "toy" locomotives and their first non-electric "automatic" cars.

The Casey Jones style steamers first appeared in two versions. The 21165 Erie was a 4-4-0 locomotive that was a departure from scale proportions. The "Tru-Action" side rods were a single stamping connected to the rear wheel on each side, and slid through holes in the cylinders. There was no connecting rod between the drivers.

The deluxe version of the Casey Jones was the 21168 Southern Railway locomotive. It had more rod action plus smoke, Choo Choo, and light which the 21165 didn't have.

Both locomotives came with either the diecast tender trucks with operating knuckle coupler, or with the new all-plastic truck-coupler unit introduced briefly in 1960 on a few uncataloged cars. Interestingly, these new locomotives ran quite well. The 21168 smoke and Choo and Choo unit was geared to run faster for a more realistic timing of that feature.

### "TOY" DIESEL

A new "toy" diesel was also brought out. The GM loco was supposed to resemble an F9 type. Unfortunately, it was too high and too short, and the shape of the nose was not correct. The plastic shell held the

trucks in place by means of slots. There was no chassis. The motor was on the rear truck with the reverse mechanism mounted to it.

The F9 came in three road names in 1961. The first was the blue 21205 Boston and Maine with white lettering. This had no light or front coupler. The second road name was Burlington. It was red with a silver stripe and lettering. It had a front coupler and light and was numbered 21210. There was no dummy unit offered for this road name. The third F9 for 1961 was the yellow and grey Union Pacific, which was only offered as a two unit set—numbers 21215 and 21215-1 or 21216. This set also had a front coupler on the power unit and it had a light.

There are two major body casting variations for the F9 diesels. The first ones had very little plastic below the truck mounting slots. These were easily broken if the trucks were removed. The second version had more plastic below the slots, which connected to the front of each step. All of the F9 diesels are known to exist with the second type casting, but only the Burlington and the power unit for the Boston and Maine and the Union Pacific's are known with the early style casting.

The Union Pacific with the early casting is a different color than the

later one. It is more of an orange like the Union Pacific Alco PA's from 1959-1960.

A new type of track was introduced in 1961. It was called Pike Master and consisted of realistic plastic ties closely spaced, rather than the four metal ties on the standard S gauge track. The major disadvantage of the new Pike Master track was the smaller radius of 15¼ inches compared to 20 inches in the standard S track.

### MODIFICATIONS

Some modifications were made to the locomotives because of the short radius track. For instance, the 21234 G&O GP-7 had the steps redesigned so that the trucks could turn more. The Alco PA diesels' front pilot corners were changed to allow the coupler to swing farther.

The new non-electric "automatic" cars included a "Tie Jector" car 25071 and two "Hay-Jector" Box cars. One was the 25081 green NYC Old-Time Box car and the other was the New Haven Box car 25082. Each of these cars operated by hitting a special track trip as the train was moving.

Some of the new cars for 1961 include the 24052 yellow United Fruit Growers Banana Box car, and the blue 24056 B&M Box car. The 24056 was made in blue plastic or painted blue. The 24126 Frisco and 24127 Monon gondolas were new. The only



new hopper was a long 24230 Peabody Coal Company car. New tank cars included the 24329 Hooker Chemical and the 24330 Bakers Chocolate car, which were both cheaper versions of earlier number cars. The same goes for the 24569 Crane car and 24572 Jeep Transport, which were new numbers.

An all new flat car was the 24566 New Haven Auto Transport car. It was black with white lettering, but a few were made in light grey with black lettering.

The only new caboose for 1961 appears to have been a mistake. The catalog lists a 24633 Silver Bay Window Caboose. Some of them turned out to be 24638. Other than the number, there is no difference.

The 25060 CB&Q Dump car and the 25061 Exploding TNT Box car were identical to the earlier versions except track contacts for both regular and Pike-Master were furnished. The 25058 Southern Pacific Lumber car and the 25059 Rocket Launcher were

also cheaper versions of previous cars. Both of these numbers came painted or bare plastic.

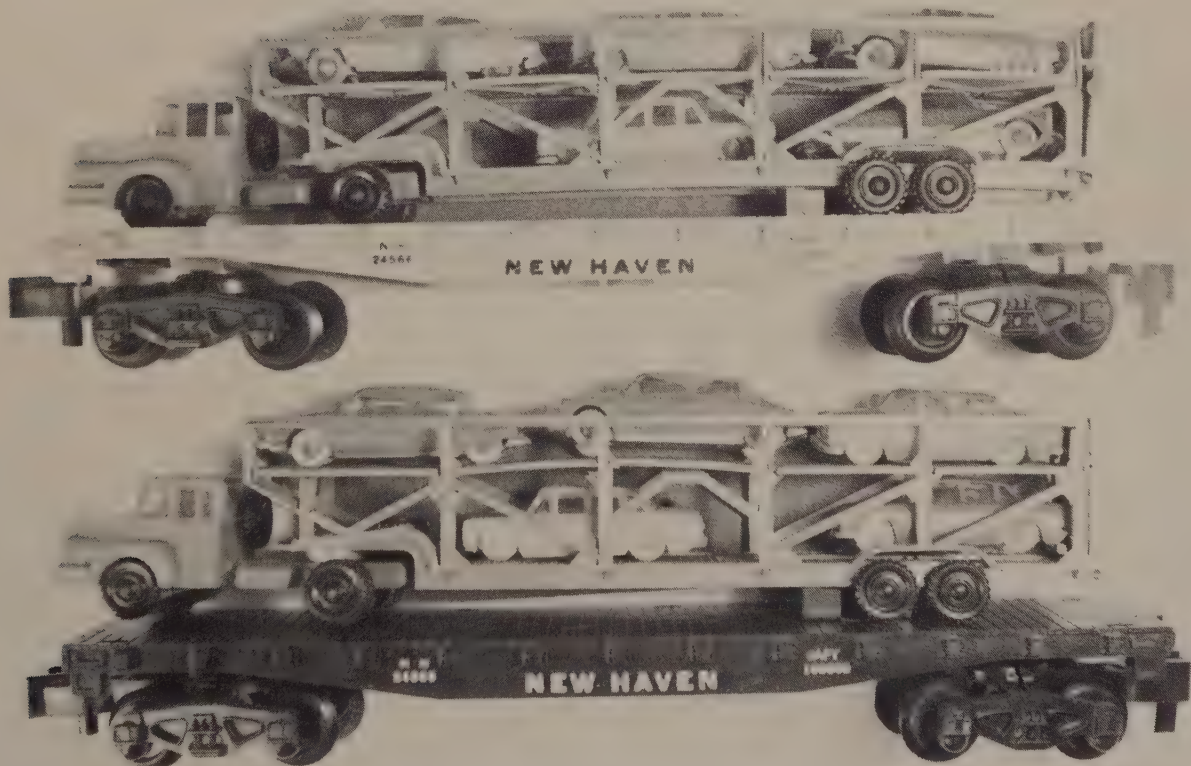
There were no new accessories for 1961. Some made minor changes and were given new numbers. These include the 23763 Bell Danger Signal, the 23764 Highway Flasher, the

26756 Bumper and the 26790 Trestle Set.

On January 24, 1961, A.C. Gilbert died of a heart ailment, and as a result of tax obligations, the Gilbert family had to divest itself of control of the company in 1962. 1961 was the last year of a Gilbert profit.



TOP. Early and late versions of new F-9.  
BOTTOM. No. 24566 New Haven flat cars were mostly black with white lettering, although a few were light grey with black lettering.





1962

# Six sets cataloged; down from nine

The American Flyer line was cut down to six cataloged sets for 1962 as compared to nine in 1961. The lowest priced set consisted of the 21165 Erie Steam Locomotive with three freight cars. Included were the new 24057 white Mounds Box car and the C2009 green Texas and Pacific Gondola. The picture in the catalog indicates the gondola as being dark green. Most of them were actually light green, and very few were made in dark green and are extremely rare.

The second set was headed by the new red and white L-2004 Rio Grande F9 type diesel. This was the cheaper series without front coupler or headlight. A dummy unit, number L-2004-1, was listed in the service manual, and at least one has turned up in a collection. Of the four cars in the Rio Grande set, two were new. The 24328 yellow Shell Tank and the 24578 New Haven Flat with blue corvette made this an interesting set.

The third set was a repeat from 1961 except for one car. The Prairie Marksman now came with the new 24054 Santa Fe Box car instead of the 24056 B&M Box car. This car comes in many minor variations. Normally it is just molded in red plastic. Sometimes it is painted red on either black, white or red plastic.

The fourth set was about the same situation as the third. One car was

Loco and tender did not disconnect in this version of the Hudson.

changed. The Champion set now came with the 24328 Shell Tank car instead of the 24330 Bakers Chocolate car.

The fifth set didn't change at all and consisted of the Santa Fe 21927 and three red stripe passenger cars. The coach #24793 was not part of the set, but it was available separately. The catalog showed this locomotive as having metal steps, although it only came with plastic steps.

The last cataloged set contained the New York Central 21130 Hudson which returned to the line by popular demand after an absence of one year. It was different than the 1959-60 model in that the locomotive and tender did not disconnect. The set came with five freight cars including the new 25062 Exploding Mine Carrier Box car. This car came in yellow with either silver roof and ends or brown roof and yellow ends. Occasionally, set #20741 with the Hudson shows up with the 25061 TNT Exploding Box car, which was discontinued the previous year. With this car is a control button that only has "American Flyer" on it.

## PIKEMASTER

All of the sets for 1962 came with the "Pike Master" track that was introduced in 1961. The standard S track and equipment was still available for separate sale.

There were many uncataloged sets made in 1962. One interesting set consisted of an uncataloged Santa Fe F9 double unit diesel 21206 and 21206-1 made for the White's Discount Stores. This set included a special yellow box car C1001 lettered for this store chain.

Also not cataloged was the new C2001 Post Cereal Box car of the old-time style. This comes either plain or with the "Hay-Jector" mechanism. I often wondered if the unloading version was supposed to be tossing out boxes of "Post Toasties."

A few pieces of the rolling stock already mentioned had a new type of number. For some reason, instead of having five-digit numbers, they had a letter and four digits. Apparently, these were blueprint numbers and were not originally planned to appear on the pieces. The "L" numbers were locos and the "C" numbers were cars. No system was used to keep these straight since some consecutive numbers were used in HO American Flyer. As an example, the C1001 was the S gauge White's Box car, the C1002 was an HO Northern Pacific Combine, C1003 was an HO NP Vista Dome, and C1004 was an HO NP Observation. The only C2000 series numbers known are the C2001 Post Box cars and the C2009 T&P Gondola.

There were no new accessories for 1962.

By popular demand

RETURN OF

THE CLASSIC

Die-Cast

Hudson

Locomotive!



... with

SMOKE,

CHOO CHOO SOUND,

HEADLIGHT,

REMOTE CONTROL,

PULL-MOR POWER



1963-1964

# 'Casey Jones' 4-4-0 made available

The year 1963 saw quite a few new items in both locomotives and cars. The Casey Jones type 4-4-0 was available in Burlington Railroad markings as number 21166. There are two versions of the model; the difference is the herald on the tender. The earlier one has the background in white with black letters, as shown in both the 1963 and 1964 catalogs. The later version has white letters on a black background and is the more common version.

The Burlington Casey Jones came in set 20763 with three cars, including the new 24124 blue Boston & Maine Gondola, the new 24058 Post Cereals Box car in white and the 24636 red Caboose which was "Radio Equipped." The B&M Gondola is usually blue plastic stamped with white letters. However, several have turned up painted dark blue on either blue or black plastic.

The Post Box car came in many different shades, from pure white to a light tan.

## GN F9's

The second new locomotive was the 21207 and 21207-1 Great Northern twin F9 diesels in orange and green. The power unit did not have a front coupler but occasionally came with a headlight. The green was usually painted on orange plastic, but a few started as blue plastic with the orange and green both painted. It was easier to paint existing bodies than mold new bodies in the desired colors. The Great Northern came in the Klondike set with five freight cars including the new 24060 red M&St.L Box car without opening doors.

The 21085 4-6-2 locomotive changed from C&NW to Milwaukee Road markings. It was available in the Mohawk set with six freight cars. Included were the new 24422 Great

Northern Reefer with sliding doors and the 24634 red Bay Window Caboose.

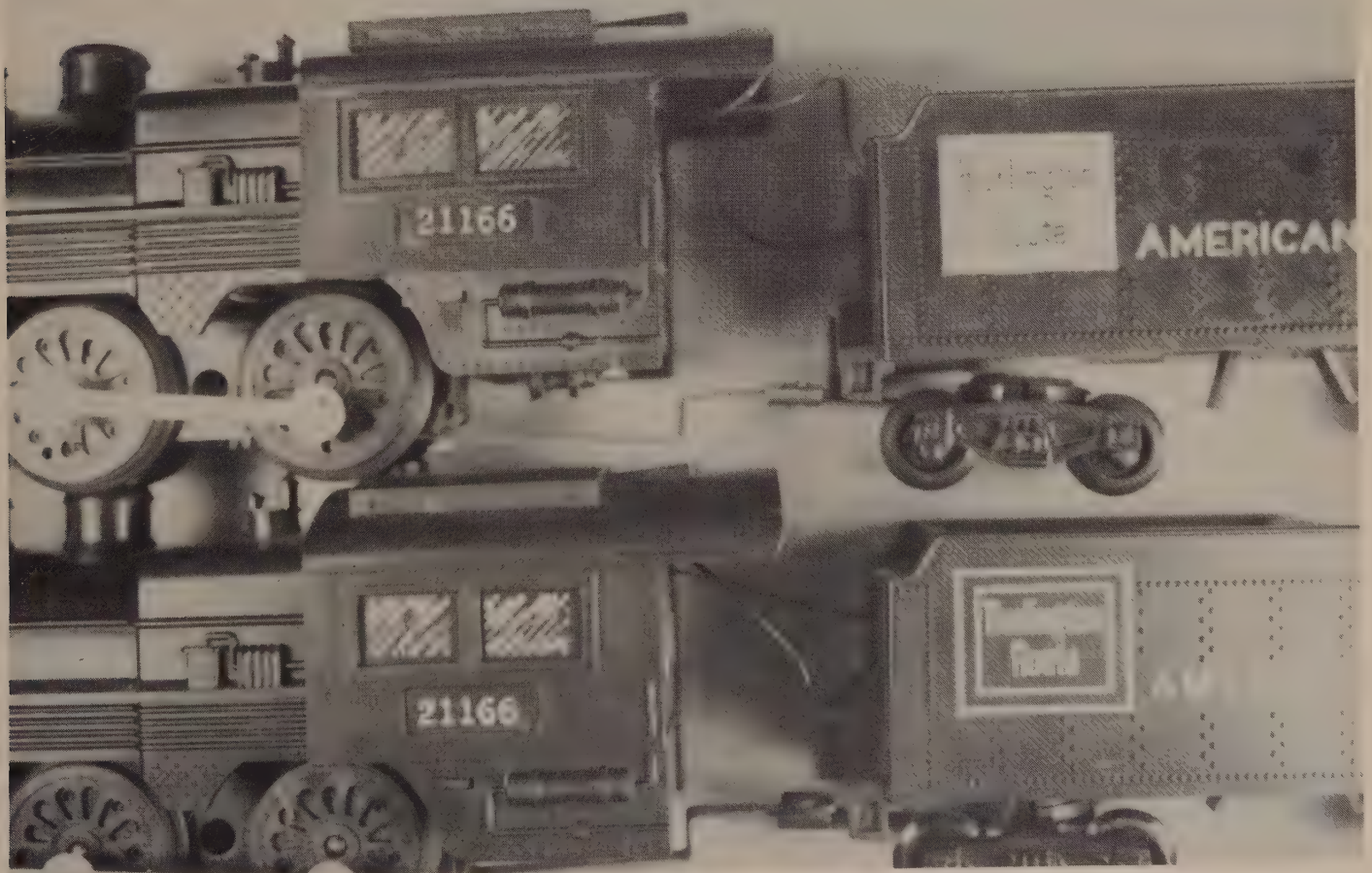
The only passenger set for 1963 was the re-issue of the Missouri Pacific Eagle. It consisted of the 21920 single motor A-unit with plastic steps and four streamlined passenger cars. They differed from the 1958 versions in that stripes didn't extend over the doors and the chassis' were fastened with rivets instead of screws. The observation had a sticker rather than the lighted drumhead. The set was the last passenger set made by American Flyer and was cataloged through 1964.

The top of the line set for 1963 was the 20768 Smokey Mountain which was headed by the 21130 NYC Hudson. It contained eight freight cars with the 24634 caboose being the only new car in the set.

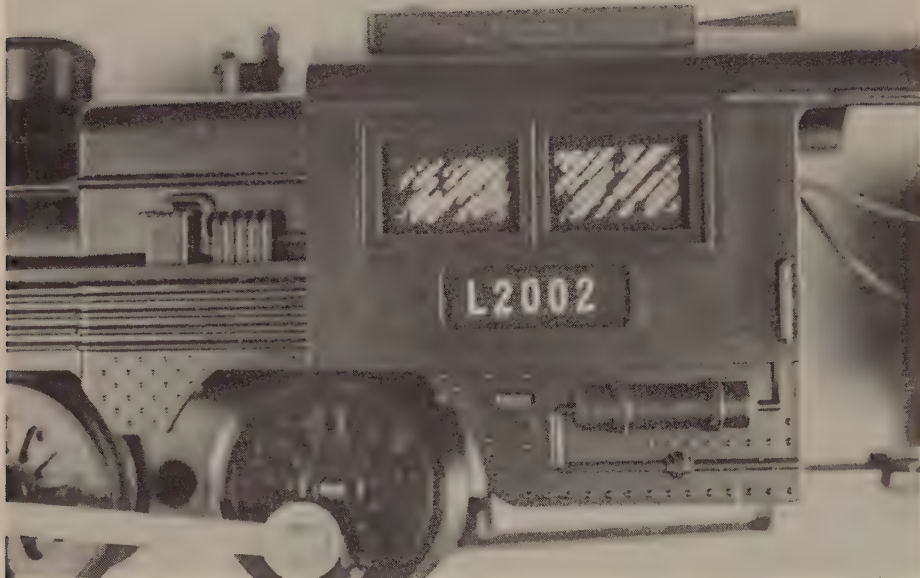
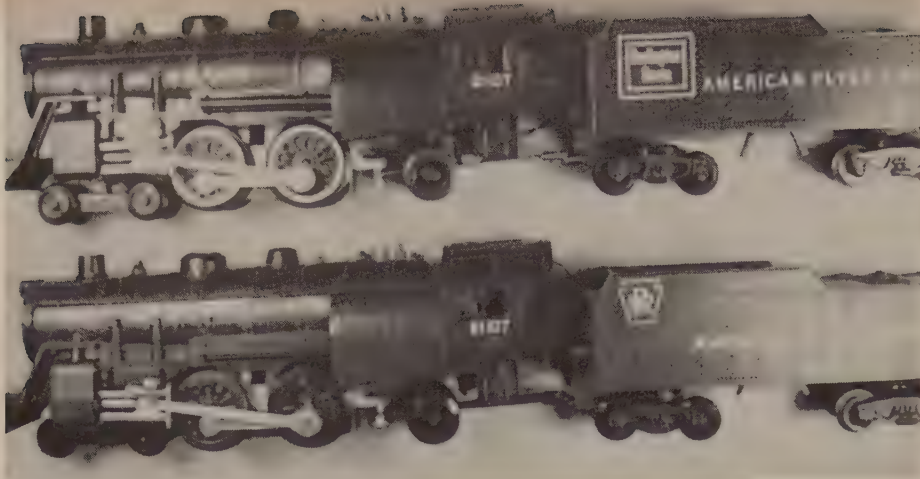
## GAME TRAIN

On the back of the 1963 catalog a

Two different 21166 Burlington heralds on the tender; more common is on bottom.







Charts, maps and folders by electric control. Colorful string of cars includes Monon gondola.

Packed 4 per carton, shipping weight 32 lbs.



NO. 20773

AMERICAN FLYER FREIGHT

"THE ALLEGHENY"

The highly-detailed Atlantic-type loco starts, stops, reverses by electric remote control, real smoke with choo-choo sound, headlight and Pull-Mor power. Complete and ready to roll, with Auto Transport car with removable autos, and its own load of five autos, T. & I.

new Game Train was shown. Set 20800 consisted of a L2001 4-4-0 locomotive with Casey Jones markings on the tender, a green Buffalo Hunt Gondola and a red Freight Ahead Caboose. Also included were a game board and many game pieces to play three different games. The name of the games appeared on the tender and two cars. The L2001 loco had no reverse unit or Pull Mor traction tires. The set retailed for \$24.98, but did not sell well. Many stores discounted the set down to \$10.00 or less.

Another locomotive, the L2002 4-4-0 without reverse unit but with Pull Mor, was made that was never cataloged. It came with either an Erie or Burlington tender.

Two other new freight cars were the 24059 blue Boston & Maine Box car and the 24222 yellow Domino Sugar covered hopper. Both of these were part of the Hawkeye set with the 21168 Southern steam locomotive.

The only new accessory for 1963 was the 23602 crossing gate that was only a modified 23601 gate of earlier design.

The year 1964 saw only minor changes with the only new item being the 21107 Atlantic. It was available as Burlington with whitewall drivers or as Pennsylvania with all black drivers.

TOP, LEFT. The only new item in 1964 was the 21107 Atlantic in two road names: Burlington with whitewall drivers and Pennsylvania with black drivers. SECOND FROM TOP. The Erie and Burlington L2002 4-4-0 was made but never cataloged. THIRD FROM TOP. The 21107 in catalog showed Pennsylvania locomotive with whitewall drivers; note 21107 in above photo with black drivers. BOTTOM LEFT. In 1963, the 21207 and 21207-1 Great Northern twin F-9's in orange and green were made available. The diesels came in the Klondike freight set with five freight cars, including the 24060 red M&StL box car without opening doors.





1965

## 'All Aboard' sets are offered

*"For the first time ever—Gilbert pioneers the complete train set—with American Flyer 'All Aboard'—all landscaped—all wired—all ready to go." This was the introduction to the 1965 American Flyer catalog.*

Only three sets were offered in the new "All Aboard" line. Each set consisted of 17 inch square panels with scenery and track; either curve, straight, crossing or a switch.

The Pioneer 600 set #20811 consisted of six panels, four curve and two straight. The engine was the 21165 Erie 4-4-0. Cars included the 24422 Great Northern Reefer, which no longer had opening doors; the 24125 Bethlehem Steel Gondola, which no longer was painted or carried the load of rails; and a red 24636 Caboose, which was no longer "radio equipped."

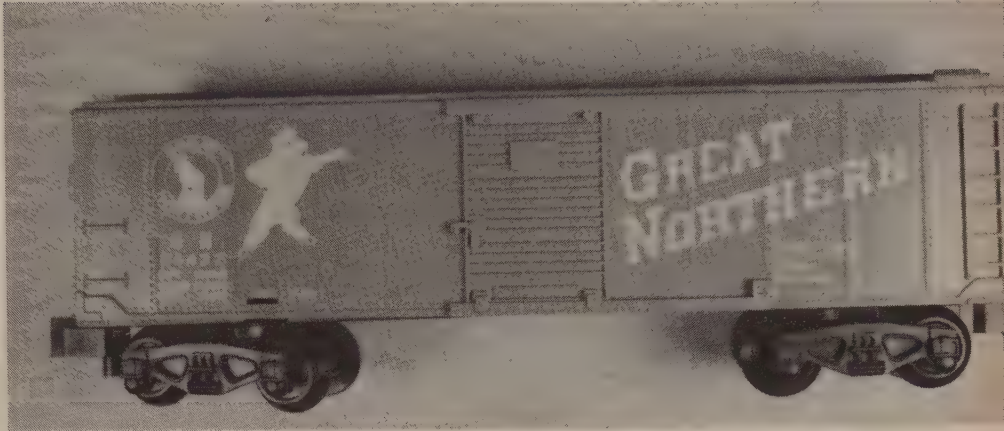
The Champion 800 set #20812 consisted of the 21107 Pennsylvania 4-4-2, the 24329 Hooker Chemical car, the 24127 Monon Gondola, the 24225 Santa Fe Hopper and the 24631 yellow Caboose. The layout had eight scenic panels, two of which had remote control switches.

### WESTERNER SET

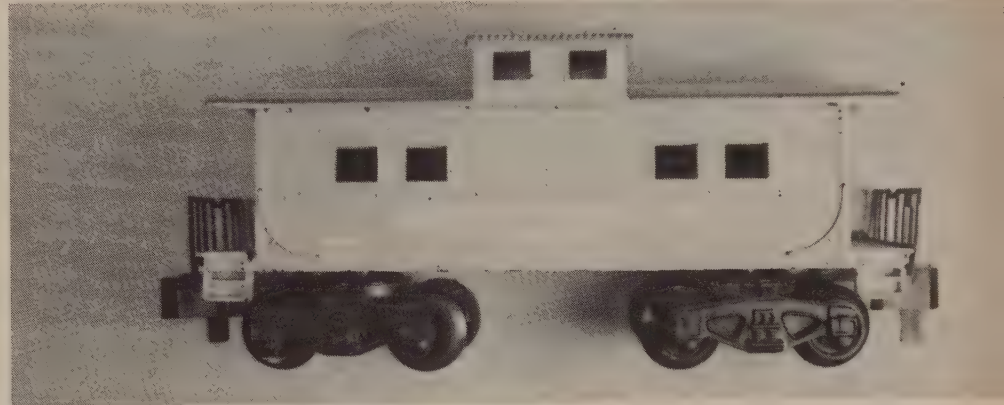
The Western 1200 set #20813 was the top of the line set and came with 12 panels, including three remote switches and a crossing. One of the panels had a whistle hidden under a house. The train was headed by the 21085 Milwaukee 4-6-2. It pulled the 24328 Tank car, the 24575 Bordens Milk car, the 24566 Auto Transport, the 24054 Santa Fe Box car and the 24634 red Bay Window Caboose.

Extra panels were available separately. Elaborate layouts could be made by adding these extra panels, but modelers were limited to certain designs. "S" turns, reverse loops and wyes were not possible. Many people eventually took the Pike Master track off the panels. The panels were designed by the Marvin Glass Company of Chicago and were hand-painted in Portugal.

Five freight cars were offered for separate sale. The 24076 Union Pacific Stock car, the 24316 Mobilgas Tank car, the 24533 Track Cleaning car, the



No. 24422 Great Northern box car.



This No. 24636 was yellow and silver instead of red.

24549 Floodlight car and the 24569 Crane. All came packaged in see-through boxes.

The 24533 Track Cleaning car had two vertical canisters instead of a horizontal tank. The canisters were either silver or white and were held in place by two Erector set brackets.

The 24549 Floodlight car now had a plastic light housing held by a sheet metal bracket. The light was either black or white.

### 14 ITEMS

The entire line for 1965 consisted of 14 items: three sets, six extra panels and five separate-sale cars. No passenger cars were available after 1964.

The American Flyer line for 1966 was unchanged except for the addition of a special Winter Wonderland set #20814. It was identical to the #20811 Pioneer 600 set with imitation snow on all the panels. Separate panels were not cataloged for the snow scene but

were offered to dealers.

Several odd cars were produced in 1966. The 24422 Great Northern turns up as a box car occasionally instead of a reefer. The 24575 Bordens Milk car also comes with no lettering on the flat.

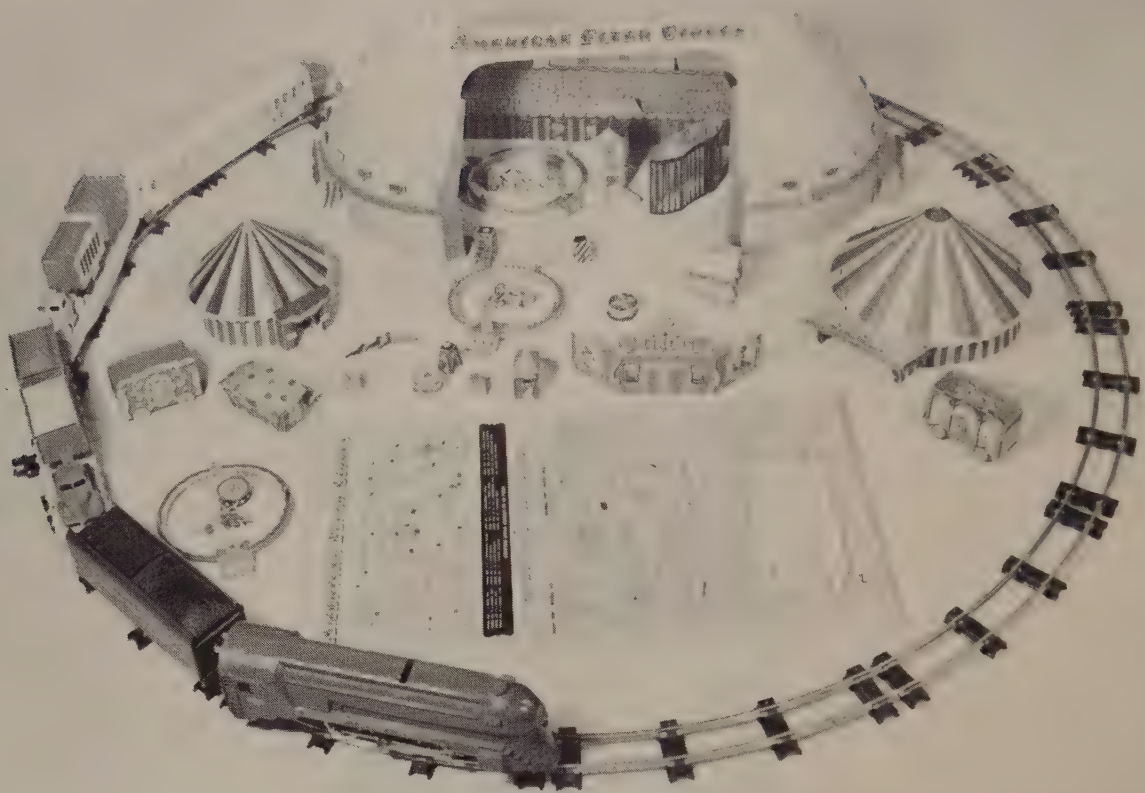
The 24636 Caboose, which is normally red, shows up in yellow and silver with white lettering.

1966 was the last full year of production for the A.C. Gilbert Company.

About April, 1967, the Gilbert Company folded. Later in the year, several people formed American Flyer Industries which was based in New York City. They tried to pick up the pieces of the Gilbert Company, but met with problems of their own.

They managed to put out a brief catalog showing some of the "All Aboard" items, as well as some of the earlier equipment, including the track maintenance car, the rocket sled and the piggyback unloader and car.





## Those rare AF circus sets

By Gary Baloun  
Photos by Don Heimburger

In 1950, American Flyer introduced the 5002T Circus Set. The set consisted of one red 353 loco, two 643 flat cars with loads, one yellow 649 coach, a 27-piece circus cutout kit and a packet of tickets. (A 25 watt transformer, circle of track, etc., were also included.)

The 353 loco is red with yellow lettering, has cast handrails, and "4-spring" link coupler trucks on the tender (two springs stamped on each side). The 1950 catalog shows the engine with wire handrails and this variation has been verified. The set was also cataloged in 1951 which was the year the longer 6-spring link coupler truck was introduced. Production of an engine with this style tender truck is unverified.

The 643 flat car was initially produced in 1950 with metal runners and a clip to hold the loads. This was apparently soon replaced by a wooden

block with rivets. Both cars are yellow with red lettering. A red flat car with yellow lettering and wooden block was also produced in 1950.

During 1951, the yellow flat car was again produced, often with 6-spring type link trucks. A slight change in the lettering style also occurred. In 1952 (and/or 53), some, if not all of the flat cars were made out of wood, probably due to material shortages caused by the Korean War. The car is again yellow and comes with either 4- or 6-spring link trucks.

The 643 loads consist of one truck and two cages. The cages are either blue-sided with a red frame, or red-sided with a blue frame. The first runs had dark yellow animals, green wheels, and either a yellow roof on the red-sided cages or green roof on the blue-sided cages. The shade or opaqueness of the red, green, blue and yellow plastics used varies. This is particularly noticeable in later runs.

There were six different animal castings: pelican, zebra, rhino, ape, lion, and panther. The first animals

were dark yellow plastic but were soon followed by a lighter or opaque yellow production. About the same time these light yellow animals were produced, the cage wheels were manufactured in white, yellow, red, blue, and green plastic. The cage wheel casting was also changed and now had "pot holes" in its rim.

In the last runs, the animals are either red or very light blue. These variations, almost without exception, came with blue animals in red-sided cages with green roofs (red-sided cages previously had yellow roofs), or red animals in blue-sided cages with yellow roofs (blue-sided cages previously had green roofs). Plain green or pot-holed blue wheels usually came under these cages.

The circus truck is green with variations in the opaqueness of the plastic. There are three castings used for truck wheels. One is the cage wheel in green (without pot-holes). The other two look more like tires. One of these "tire" castings came in the following colors: green, red, blue, black, cream,



and reddish-brown. The other "tire" casting had a larger hub-cap and came in cream.

The circus loads were produced by another company, "Allied," prior to American Flyer using them. The castings vary slightly and are shown in the 1950 catalog. The cages come in a wide variety of colors including cage sides of green, yellow, red or blue; cage frames of light blue, red, yellow, green, or blue; and roofs of light blue, red, green, or yellow. There does not appear to be any pattern to color combination construction. The circus truck also comes in red, light blue, green or yellow. It also appears that another well-known model company, "Pyro," also produced a similar tank in army olive green after American Flyer used the design.

The 649 coach was yellow with red lettering and read "World's Greatest Show." A pre-production mock-up is shown in the 1953 catalog that reads "Greatest Show On Earth." This was probably never put into production. The first run was an unpainted orange-yellow car, usually on a die-cast frame. Later, the car was unpainted light yellow with either a sheet metal or die cast frame. The last runs were painted yellow (normally on cream plastic, but occasionally on

green or red plastic as used for New Haven coaches), usually with a sheet metal frame. Pre-production red circus passenger cars have also been seen.

Painting a car is usually more expensive than using the color or bare plastic. Yet, this is what American Flyer did on its last runs of 649 coaches around 1952. At the same time, yellow cage animals were replaced by red or blue ones. This is also the year that the yellow 639

became a cream colored reefer. American Flyer must have had some difficulty keeping supplied with yellow plastic material; yellow plastic seems to disappear in 1952, and it doesn't re-appear until 1960 in the 23743 track maintenance car, and the (25515) rocket sled.

The American Flyer Circus equipment adds many interesting variations to a collector's shelves. Many unheard of variations are probably still waiting in someone's attic.



Circus flats, top to bottom: metal-yellow, wooden-yellow, metal-red, metal-yellow with runners and clip.

#### No. 5002T AMERICAN FLYER CIRCUS TRAIN

Now, the American Flyer Circus Train is like this — a complete Circus layout, including everything you need to make it run. Flat Cars with Animal Cages, a Pullman Car, a Bright yellow Pullman Car for Troupers, PLUS a 27 piece Circus Kit! Transformer and Track also included — everything you need to set up and run Circus tents, wagons, etc. shipped flat in die-cut sheets. Assembly is quick and easy. Track forms 140" oval. Train measures 3 ft., 11 1/2 in.

Price, \$27.95

Denver and West, \$29.00

#### No. 5002T CIRCUS TRAIN INCLUDES

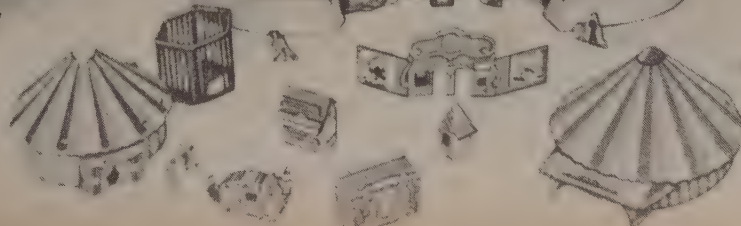
- 1 No. 1000 Electric Locomotive and Tender. Enamel and metal construction with yellow lettering.
- 2 No. 704 Circus Flat Cars. Die-cast, has enamel yellow with red lettering. Each carries circus animal cage and tractor.
- 1 No. 649 Pullman Car. 10' long. Letter illuminated. Enamel bright yellow with red lettering.
- 1 No. 702 Curved Track. 2 sec. No. 700 Straight Track.
- 1 No. 125 Watt Transformer.
- 1 No. 690 Trackwork. 1 No. 690 Track Terminal. 1 No. 704 Uncoupler.
- Illustrated Train Booklet — Circus Scene Kit and Package of Tokens.



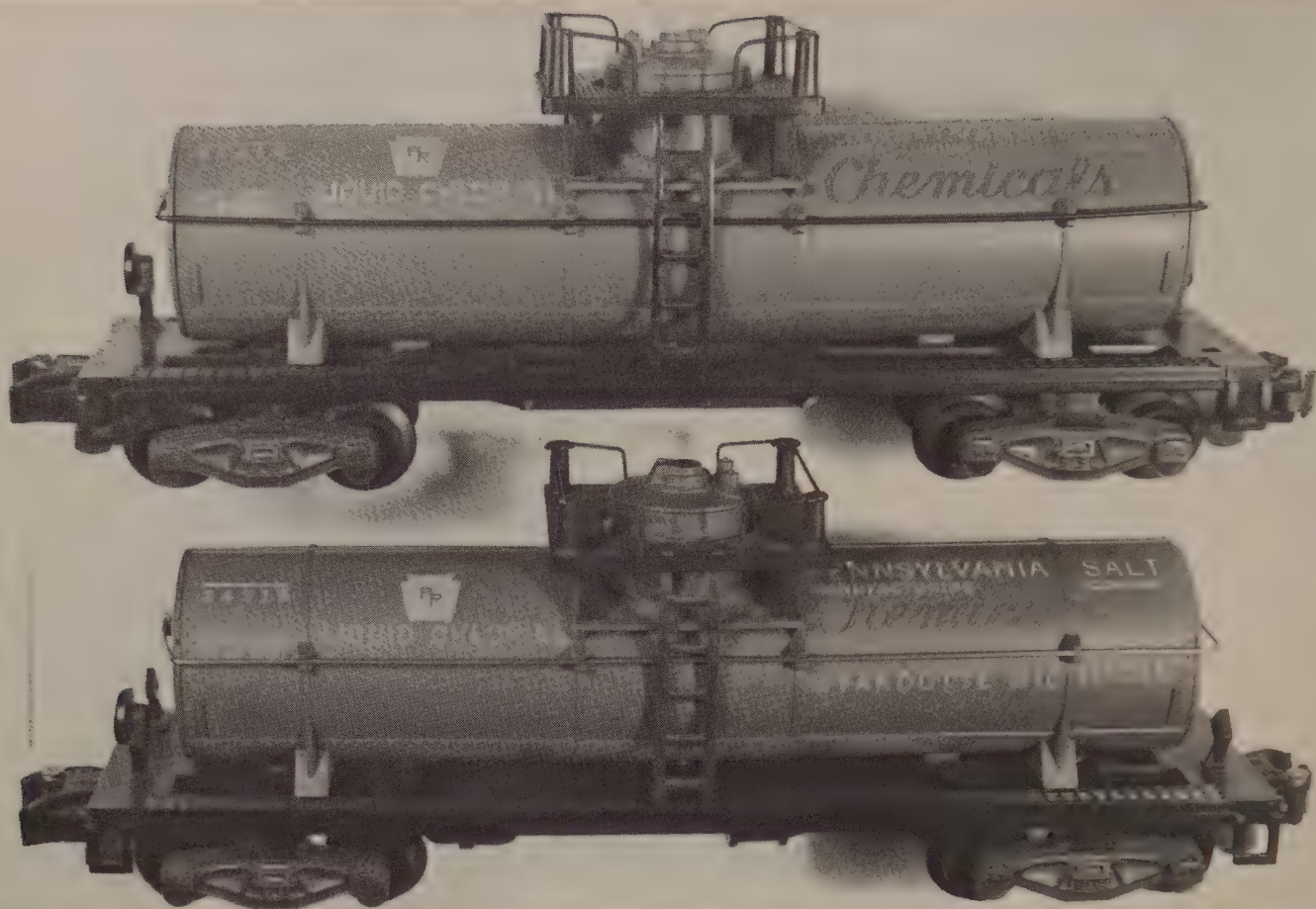
American Flyer Superpower Transformer is included with Circus Train above. Has 25-Watt power and operates on 60 Cycles A.C.

### Festive Big Top Setting!

What fun you can have with it — 27 easy to put together pieces. The Circus Train with which it comes will unfold make believe the Troupers (Circus), the Flat Car (Circus), the Sideshow, Animal Cage, the Collapsible Flat Car, the Troupers, Train, and Package of Tickets.







The reproduction Penn Salt is on the top; original on the bottom.

## The tank cars debut in 1946

The American Flyer tank car made its first appearance in S gauge in 1946. As number 625, it was first cataloged in orange with black ends and top and came with Shell markings. There are several variations of the orange Shell car.

The earliest variation had a capacity of 8,000 pounds and was painted a shiny orange on orange plastic and came with a plastic chassis. The lettering was thin, and the wheels had small, almost scale flanges which were unlike most American Flyer S wheels.

The second version was unpainted orange plastic with a correct capacity of 80,000 pounds. The lettering was thicker and sometimes looked smeared. The third and fourth versions were painted dull orange with lettering similar to the unpainted version. The fourth variation is missing the bottom line of lettering. Some of the last orange Shell cars came on diecast chassis rather than plastic.

### BLACK TANKS

During the production of orange 625 Shell Tank cars, Gilbert also started to produce black shell tank cars. The lettering was silver in 1946 and changed to white in 1947. Although the black Shell was never cataloged, it was made in much larger quantities than the orange Shell. In 1946 the chassis were either plastic or diecast. The capacity varied from the correct 80,000 lbs. to 800,000 lbs., which was a mistake.

Late in 1947, the 625 Shell Tank changed to silver. The silver Shells all had diecast chassis and came with the same weight variations as the black Shell. The silver Shell was not cataloged until 1949, and continued to be made until 1950.

In 1951, Gilbert finally changed the name to Gulf, but the number on the tank cars was still 625. They must have been in a rut. The first Gulf tank cars still had the "SEPX" Shell markings that were later changed to the cor-

rect "GRCX" Gulf markings. Over the years, the Gulf decal changed many times. The letters came plain or with cross-hatching, and colors of the decals differed from year to year. In later years the Gulf emblem was a paper sticker rather than a decal.

### 625G

In 1952 the number gained a suffix and became 625G. This number remained through 1953, which was the end of the line for link coupler era tank cars.

Knuckle coupler tank cars initially started in the 900 series. The lowest number was the 910 Gilbert Chemical car. This was made only in 1954 and was the first car to come with the platform mounted on it. Originally, the Gilbert 910 was to be a Celanese Chemical car, but A.C. Gilbert decided to change it to Gilbert chemicals. This is why it is in the green and yellow color scheme of the Celanese Chemical Company. At least one sample of this car with Celanese markings



is known to exist.

The next number is the 912 Koppers Chemical car, which was first introduced in 1955. It has orange lettering on a black tank with white stickers, which sometimes turned various shades of gray because of the glue that was used to hold them to the tanks. In 1957 the catalog number changed to 24306, although the car itself remained 912. The chassis, however, did change from diecast metal to plastic.

#### THE 925 TANK

The next number is the 925 Gulf Tank car, which is the knuckle coupler version of the 625G mentioned earlier. It was first made in 1952 and came only with the K325 Hudson in set #K5206W. The earliest ones had a strange knuckle coupler that was riveted to the truck in the same manner as the link coupler. The 925 Gulf went to a plastic chassis in 1957, as did all of the tank cars that year.

The year 1955 saw the first 3-dome tank car. The number was 926 and the markings were again Gulf. The 3-dome tank car was available only in the Gulf name for its entire six year period.

The next number was the 958 Mobilgas tank car, which was introduced in 1957. It was red with white lettering and came with either a metal or plastic chassis that year. The 958 was never listed in the catalog since all items in 1957 were listed with the new five digit numbers.

The 24309 Gulf Tank car is a late version of the 925 Tank car. It was made in 1958 and came with either a screw-on chassis or a snap-on chassis. The

24310 Gulf Tank car is an uncataloged car with solid knuckle couplers and was made from 1958 to 1960.

The 24313 3-dome Gulf is identical to the plastic chassis 926 except for the number. They were made 1958 to 1960. Some of those made in 1960 were the split tank type that had the bottom of the tank as a part of the plastic frame.

The next number is the 24316 Mobilgas Tank car. This is the five digit version of the 958. There are many variations of this car. They came with the late split tanks, Pikemaster trucks, dull and shiny finishes; some of the last ones were painted red over blue paint.

The Penn Salt 24319 Chemical car is one of the most sought after tank cars. Made in 1958 only, it was blue with yellow and red lettering. It was one of the first cars to jump in value because of its scarcity. This car has been reproduced, so beware of fakes.

#### DEEP ROCK

The 24320 Deep Rock Tank car is a very scarce uncataloged tank car. It is the split tank variety with solid knuckle couplers and was part of set #20018, made in 1960. The 24321 Deep Rock was the cataloged version of the Deep Rock. Brought out in 1959, it normally doesn't have handrails or a brakewheel. Some were made in 1960 with solid knuckle couplers and substituted for the 24320 in set #20018.

The 24322 Gulf Tank car was introduced in 1959 and usually had no handrails and frame trim. The 1960 version had the later split tank and is very scarce.

The Bakers Chocolate 24323 was

new for 1959 and was white with gray platform and ends. Although it isn't a chemical car, it has the platform on top. Like most tank cars in 1960, it also came in the split tank variety. This is an easy one to spot because the ends are white instead of gray.

The 24324 Hooker Chemical car was very colorful, being orange and black. Introduced in 1959, it is the only tank car cataloged in 1960 that is not known to have been made in the split tank version.

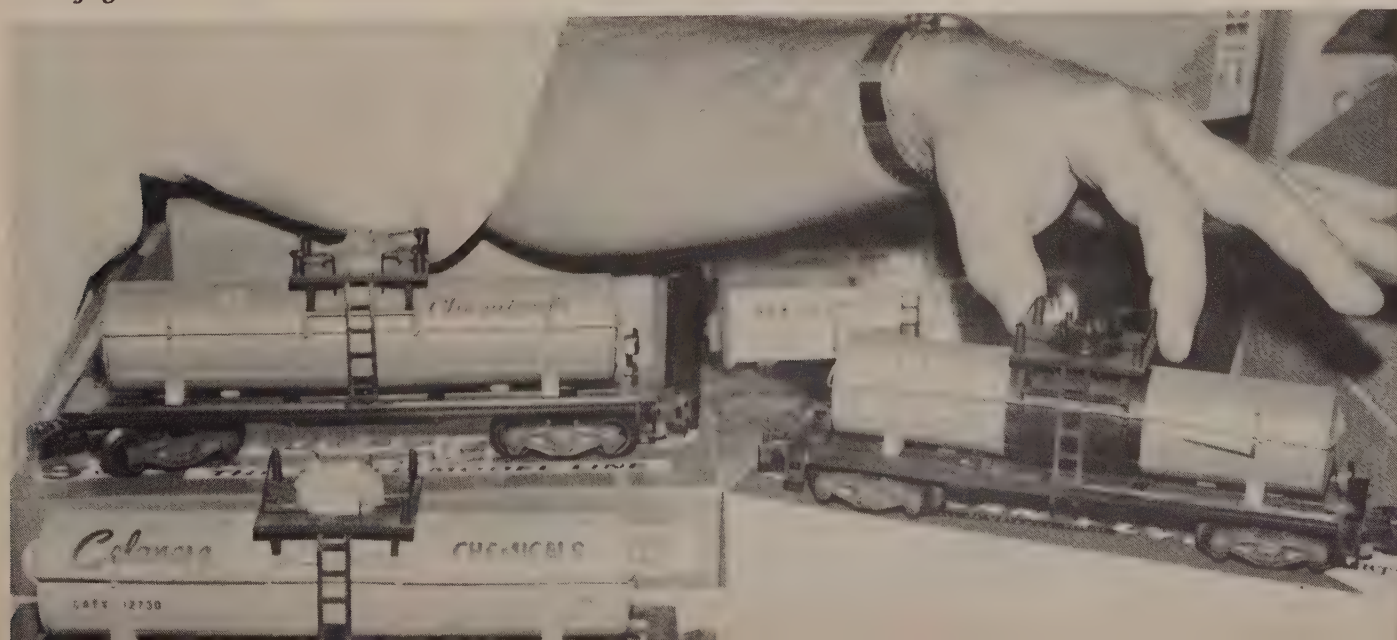
The last Gulf tank to appear was the 24325. It was another uncataloged car and was equipped with solid knuckle couplers. The later versions had the split tank and some of these had Pikemaster trucks. 24325 Gulf tanks were made in 1960 to 1961.

Gilbert finally got back to Shell in 1962 with number 24328. Normally found in bright yellow plastic, some were painted yellow on white plastic. This car continued until Gilbert went out of business in 1967.

A cheaper version of the Hooker Chemical car was introduced in 1961 as #24329. This car was orange plastic of several different shades and was available with the new Pikemaster trucks. Some had the platforms missing and others had the numbers missing.

The high number in the tank cars was the 24330 Bakers Chocolate. Again, this was a cheaper version of the 24323 car. The 24330 came with gray or black platforms and had light or dark brown lettering. It is bare white plastic and is fairly common.

Peter Jugle's AF collection includes these tank cars: Hooker, Celanese, Penn Salt and Baker's.





# Outside suppliers help Gilbert

What had begun as a desire to produce HO trains had mushroomed into the purchase of the entire American Flyer toy train line. Although A.C. Gilbert was already one of the largest toy makers, the assumption of the Flyer line was the largest undertaking Gilbert had ever made. To attempt to produce the entire train line themselves would have proven to be extremely difficult, unwise and a needless drain on the company's resources. In order to prevent the need to produce the entire line, Gilbert was to rely on other suppliers for some parts, assemblies and finished products for most of the years that it owned the toy train line.

The first of these suppliers was the American Flyer Mfg. Co. in Chicago, from whom Gilbert had purchased the train line and who had transferred its remaining stock, dies, tools and work in process to the A.C. Gilbert Company. Much of the 1938 line was manufactured by the American Flyer Mfg. Co., but was sold in A.C. Gilbert boxes, or at least with A.C. Gilbert stickers. Many of the suppliers to the American Flyer Mfg. Co. had now become suppliers to A.C. Gilbert. Among these was the Jefferson Electric Company in Chicago, who had manufactured transformers for American Flyer for many years. Most of the suppliers who provided finished products made accessories and not rolling stock or track.

Mini-Craft barn and diner (front); AF versions (rear).



The American Flyer plastic structures on left; Colber counterparts on right.

## COLBER CORP.

The supplier represented by the most products in the AF line was the Colber Corporation. By early 1950 the Colber Corporation also included Minitoys, Incorporated. The December 1949 *Railroad Model Craftsman* had separate advertisements with separate addresses for Minitoys and Colber. Colber was a "dealer only" company, but Minitoys dealt either through dealers or the purchaser could buy direct from the company. The 1950 Colber catalog continued to show Minitoys items as Minitoys, In-

corporated, but no separate address given. No separate ads for Minitoys appeared in RMC other than "Watch Minitoys in 1950" with the Minitoys address.

The 1950 AF line included many of the Colber Corporation products. The 769 Aircraft Beacon, the 773 Oil Derrick, the 774 Floodlight, and the 772 Watertank were all part of the Colber plastic structures line. The colors and markings were changed to distinguish the items made for American Flyer from those marketed by Colber itself. Colber supplied scenic accessories including 21A Grass, 22A Gravel, 23A Coal, 28 Ballast and 29A Snow. Metal structures included the 753 Single and 754 Double Trestle Bridges.

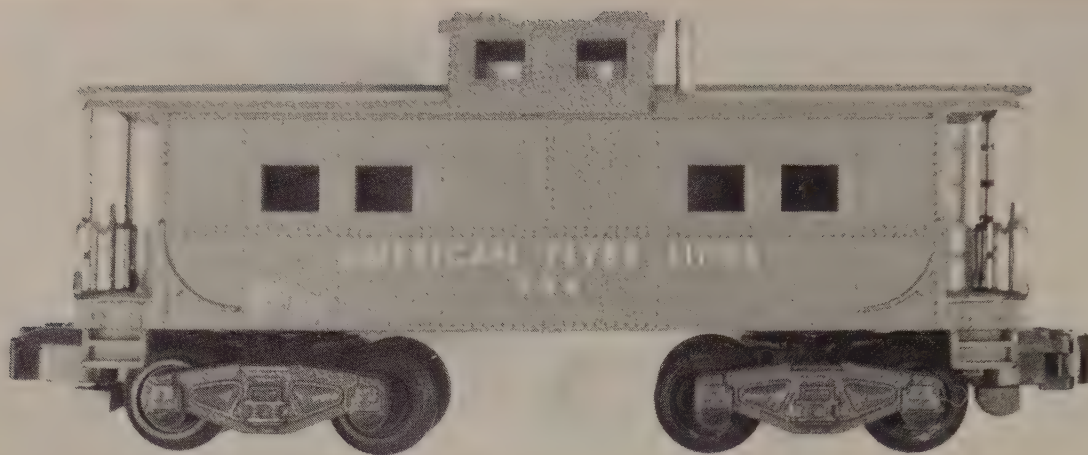
By 1955 Colber Corporation was no longer sending out catalogs and was indicating that they were going out of business. Colber was originally in East Orange, New Jersey, and later moved to an Irvington, New Jersey address which indicates that Colber was right in Lionel's own backyard. The brief history of the Colber Corporation is both interesting and significant, and a more extensive study of the Colber Corporation would prove interesting.

Minitoy was first introduced as "Minatoy" in the March 1948 issue of *Model Builder*, which was the toy train magazine of the Lionel Corporation. Minitoy was a subsidiary of Miniature









Made in 1955, this is the uncataloged No. 934.

## Cabooses and their uses

Most American Flyer freight trains came with a caboose. Over the years, many different numbers and variations of those numbers were used. The numbers usually indicated a change of some sort. Some numbers were used for many years, and for some of these numbers, there are many variations.

In 1946, the first year of production after the war, the catalog indicated

that the 630 Reading Caboose was illuminated and made of lightweight plastic. This is partially true. Some had lights, others did not. Apparently, there was a shortage of lamps, so the cheaper sets usually did not have illumination. The ones with lights had an "L" stamped on the carton after the number 630.

Most of the 1946 cabooses had a plastic chassis, but some of the last

ones did have a diecast metal chassis. The ones with a plastic chassis are found in either red or black plastic. Some had dark red bodies with a light red chassis, giving them a strange appearance.

### STANDARD RED

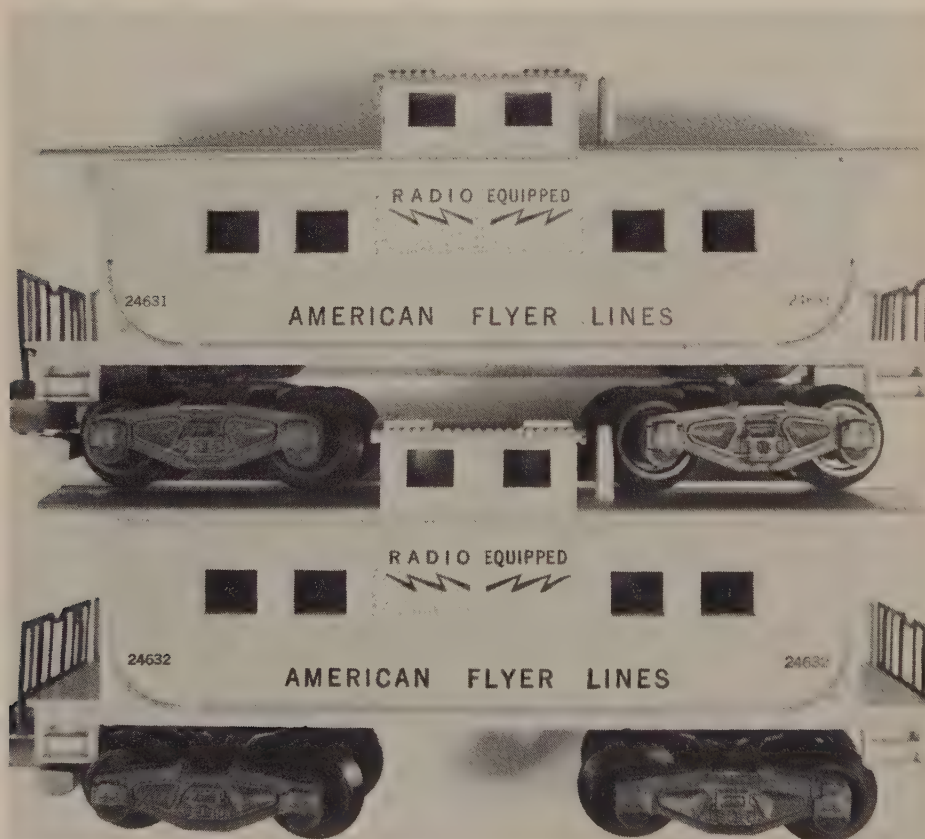
Most cabooses in 1947 were like the late 1946 models in that they all had a diecast metal chassis. Most were the standard red in color, but a few had dark red bodies. The colors did have a tendency to fade making the cabooses look orange.

There were no major changes in 1948, but in 1949 sheet metal chassis were used in place of diecast metal. A cheaper line of cars was introduced with no road names, just the name "American Flyer." The caboose had no lights and was numbered 638. This continued through 1953 with the lettering changing to "American Flyer Lines" that final year. Some were painted red and others were bare plastic over the five year history of the 638.

In 1950, Gilbert went back to the die-cast chassis for the last year. Again in 1951 it was the sheet metal chassis which was the type used until the end.

Several changes were made in 1952. The lettering went from "Reading" to "American Flyer," the bodies were painted instead of bare plastic and a knuckle coupler version #930 was added to the line. The last 930 cabooses made in 1952 were brown instead of red.

In 1959 the No. 24626 became the 24631; the 24632 was uncataloged.





From 1953 to 1957, the 930 stayed about the same with "American Flyer Lines" lettering on a brown car. Some of the last 930 cabooses had radically different chassis. It was the one-piece floor and end railings with the light riveted to the center of it. The chassis had to be removed to change the bulb.

In 1954, the 938 caboose with knuckle couplers replaced the 638. The 938 lasted through 1955 and was painted red with white "American Flyer Lines." One odd variation of this car exists. It is made with the body from a 977 action caboose which was introduced in 1955. The 977 in 1955 looked like a standard 930 caboose, except it had a little metal man leaning out the rear. When the power was on, he would pull back onto the end platform. The 1956 through 1958 versions of this caboose had rubber men.

#### UNCATALOGED CABOOSE

One uncataloged caboose was made in 1955. It was the 934 and differed from the 938 in that it had two couplers. It is strange that they assigned that number because it was already issued to a searchlight car in the previous years. The 934 usually appears with the 343 switcher, thus accounting for the two couplers.

In 1956 Gilbert introduced a new line of cheaper knuckle coupler cars. It was the 800 series and the caboose was 806 "American Flyer Lines." Basically, they differed from the regular line of 900 series cars in that they were not painted. The 806 lasted through 1957.

One other caboose was made in 1956 only. It was the 904 and was identical to a 938 except it had window inserts, even though it was not illuminated. The year 1957 saw a new style of caboose for the first time. These will be discussed at the end of this article.

The 5-digit numbering system began appearing on the cars in 1958. The 24603 was the same as an 806. A yellow and silver caboose number 24626 was introduced and came in several sets in 1958. This was the first attempt at a brightly colored caboose. In 1959 the number changed to 24631. A few sets came with an uncataloged 24632 caboose in yellow and silver. The 24631 continued through 1961 with very few changes.

The 24627 Caboose was a standard red caboose made in 1959-1960. There were also two uncataloged numbers in red: the 24610 and 24630 both with solid knuckle couplers. In 1960 the

red caboose became 24636 with the new, all-plastic Pikemaster trucks. These were made through 1966 with several lettering changes and occasionally had "Radio Equipped" lettering. A few 24636 Cabooses were made in 1966 using leftover yellow and silver bodies from the 24631. These stand out like a sore thumb because they have white lettering.

The bay window caboose introduced in 1957 also had a cupola, making it a rather odd type of caboose. It is understood that there were two prototype cars made for some railroad of this type. Two versions were offered by Gilbert, a non-operating was #935 and the action version was #979. They were both brown in color. In 1958 the 935 became 24619. The 979 changed in color to silver and became 25052. These new numbers only lasted one year.

In 1959 the bay window was not available as an action car, but was painted silver and became #24633. This number lasted through 1962. A few made in 1961 had the number 24638, but these are scarce. In 1963 the silver gave way to bright red and the number became 24634, which lasted through the end in 1967.

#### ERECTOR TOWER DESTROYED BY HIGH WINDS

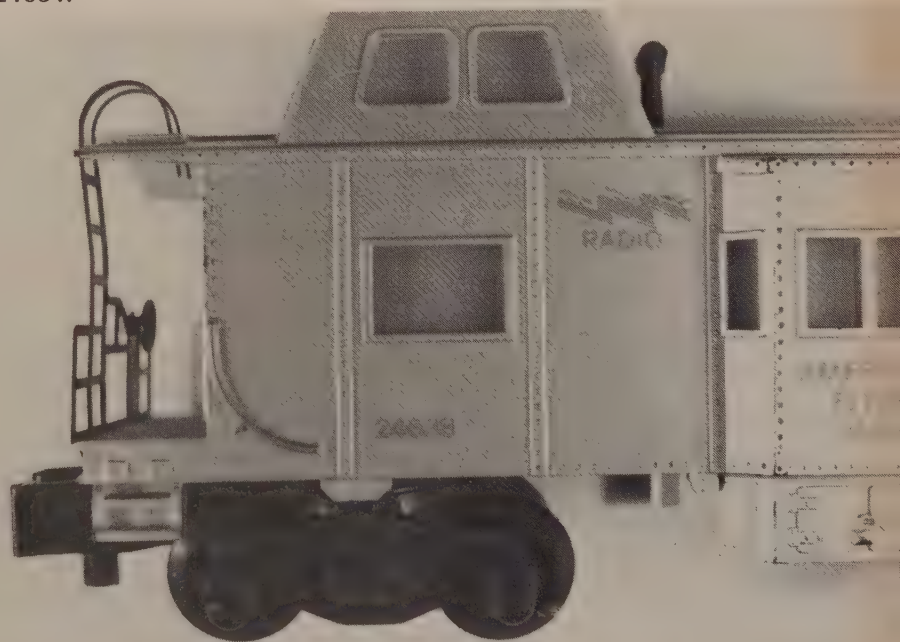
New Haven, January 16, 1978—For nearly three-quarters of a century, the structure which had served as a radio tower for one of the nation's early radio stations, had survived hurricanes, and all other kinds of bad weather. However, just as the A.C. Gilbert Company was brought down in 1967, the Erector tower came crashing down in January, with the exception that the tower chose to land right atop the New Haven-to-Boston Amtrak line.

The 60-foot tower was made of steel girders and had the word "Erector" down two adjacent sides. Each of the letters was outlined with light bulbs. For many years the tower had dominated the skyline over A.C. Gilbert's Erector Square.

In the early years of the company, "wireless sets" were a part of the young firm's line. The tower, along with a transmitting railroad car, was used for radio shows to help sell the sets. The tower had been moved in the last three years, and had not been anchored at the base, but was instead chained to a building window. When it went over, the window frame went with it.

One casualty was a two-hour delay in the arrival of the "Night Owl" Amtrak train to Boston. A large crew of workmen using torches cut up the bent and battered steel framework, and left it in a pile next to what used to be the Gilbert warehouse.

A few of the bay window cabooses made in 1961 had the number 24638, but these are scarce. In 1963, the silver gave way to bright red and the number became 24634.





# Gilbert's comic books

In 1956 Gilbert did some advertising in an unusual manner by giving away small "comic books" in cereal boxes. The American Flyer "Adventure Series" was distributed in Kellogg's Sugar Smacks and Sugar Pops. Six different stories made up the series. On the back of each comic the complete series was shown along with a coupon for the 1956 catalog and Marshall McClintock's *How to Build and Operate a Model Railroad*.

Each story was printed on pulp paper; it was not as durable as the catalogs and other Gilbert paper. It is probable that not too many of these survive today. Most collectors do not even realize that they exist.

*The Ghost Express* (pages 1-14) A crack streamliner makes its way through the mountains. A train light appears on the track ahead, but no train is there. It is a diversion to allow crooks to rob the train. When railroad detective Chuck Blaine returns home, his son is playing with his realistic American Flyer Pacemaker Freight with headlight and sound effects. Blaine gets an idea! The next day he adds power floodlight cars to the train, which illuminate an airplane. The crooks are caught. Son Tommy gets a new power floodlight car for his train layout for helping his father catch the crooks.

*The Big Crack-up* (pages 1A-16A) A freight train and a streamliner approach each other on connecting spurs. The engineers both jump! The trains meet in a mighty collision! It is a scene being filmed for a movie. The trains are elaborate props that took months to construct. The film truck then catches fire and the films are destroyed. Pete Saunders, the special effects man, ponders the hopeless situation—how to replace the expensive props before the film company goes broke? Arriving home, he is met by his son playing with his Santa Fe El Capitan. It just misses his Trailblazer freight at the switch. "Great scott—What an idea!", says his father. The next day at the studios, he uses American Flyer trains and blows up lenses to re-film the crash sequence. You can't tell the difference from real life, and Pete

saves the movie. Pete buys his son a new train set and B.J., Pete's boss, thinks model trains would be a good hobby for his son too.

*The Circus Train* (pages 1B-16B) Old Thad Russell, a retired railroad engineer, is showing off his train collection to the neighborhood boys. His favorites are the New Haven Clipper, the Union Pacific Challenger Freight and the Circus Train he once drove for the Dingle Brothers Circus. He recalls the night he pulled the circus train into a flooded town. The circus folk and animals help the town survive the ravages of the flood. The giraffes step through high water saving small children, the elephants put out fires, the hippo breaks up a pile of debris in front of the store, and the clowns entertain the children. The citizens will never forget the wonderful circus folk. That is why the circus train is the most important in Thad's collection. There is an adventure behind every train on his train table. Thad suggests the boys form an American Flyer Boys Railroad Club.

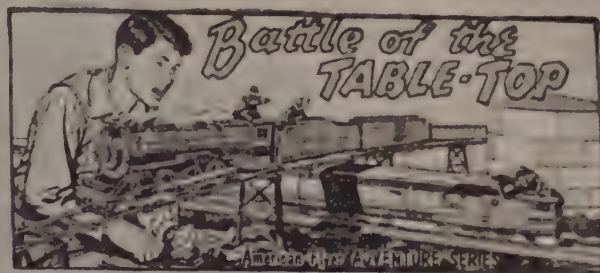
*Battle of the Table Top* (pages 1C-16C) Two crooks attempt to steal the size reducing machine from the laboratory of famed inventor professor Carter. A crook falls against the switch and all three are reduced to the size of toy soldiers by the reducing ray. Professor Carter runs to the next room where his son Terry is playing with his American Flyer trains. He explains to his astonished son that he must not touch or their molecular structure will be altered. Judicious use of the operating log car and operating milk car disarm the crooks. Terry's father escapes on a hand car as Terry traps the crooks under a pile of coal from his American Flyer coal loader. Reversing the ray brings them all back to normal. Terry's father is amazed by how realistic his son's trains appeared when he was reduced so small, and how realistic is the tiny world you can create with a hobby like American Flyer model trains.

*The Boy Engineer* (pages 1D-16D) Larry Forbes is about to leave for the depot. He takes one last look at his layout that earned him first place and

a trip aboard the locomotive of the Super Express for winning the boy engineer contest. Engineer Mike Cassidy explains the semaphore signal and the air brake lever as they leave the station on the Express. On a slow curve, two escaping crooks jump onto the train and take over the engine. They knock out Engineer Cassidy. As the Express passes through Avalanche Gorge, Larry has an idea—he toots the whistle. "Regulations," he tells the crooks. Ahead, the train stops, but as the crooks reach their car with the loot, they are met by the cops. Larry explains that tooting the whistle in the gorge is against regulations and that some rocks fell and hit the electric safety fence alerting the nearest signal tower, where the alert signalman overheard the crooks tell about their getaway car on the two way radio, which Larry had left on "send." The next day he receives an American Flyer model of the Express from Cassidy. Larry explains how much he has learned about railroad-ing from his American Flyer trains.

*Highball to Mars* (pages 1E-16E) Engineer Josh Wilson is about to run the remaining tracks and ballast to a crew further up the line as the Super Express whizzes by. Suddenly a Martian appears in his cab and before he knows what is happening, they are speeding toward Mars at millions of miles an hour. When they land with the train on Mars, the Martian introduces Josh to his son XL2Z, who collects models of vehicles from other worlds. His favorite models are of the Earth's trains. On each birthday the Martian brings another train from Earth to Mars to duplicate with his Martian duplicating ray. Josh notes that the result is as pretty as any American Flyer model he has ever seen. Returning to Earth, he decides he had better keep quiet about his trip to Mars. He is 20 minutes late because of "engine trouble." He later notes that we are indeed lucky because we do not need to have duplicating rays, because we can buy American Flyer model trains and accessories just like the Northern Pacific refrigerator car he just bought for his grandson.





#### Special RAILROAD offer - 25¢

1. HOW TO BUILD AND OPERATE A MODEL RAILROAD. Tells how to study, plan and build model R.R. Shows how to make mountains, tunnels, landscaping etc. Filled with instructions only. 100 pages.
2. 52-page full color AMERICAN FLYER train coloring. Shows every train, all accessories.

BOTH ONLY 25¢ — Send coupon today.

THE A.C. GILBERT COMPANY, DEPT. 106,  
Erector Square, New Haven 6, Conn.

Enclosed is 25¢ in coin.  
Rush both train books.

Name .....

Street .....

City ..... Zone ..... State .....

#### FREE!

SIX NEW and EXCITING TRAIN ADVENTURES in full color!



ONE IN EVERY  
SPECIALLY MARKED  
PACKAGE OF

SUGAR  
SMACKS  
and SUGAR POPS!

Gilbert used these small comic books as advertising in cereal boxes. There were six different stories distributed in Kellogg's Sugar Smacks and Sugar Pops in 1956.



Advertising Displays

# 1955 ELECTROTYPE CATALOG

## AMERICAN FLYER TRAINS—GILBERT TOYS



Advertising Department

The A. C. Gilbert Company, New Haven, Conn.



These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



No. 5500T Atlantic Freight  
Halftone No. 8658—Line Electro No. 8659



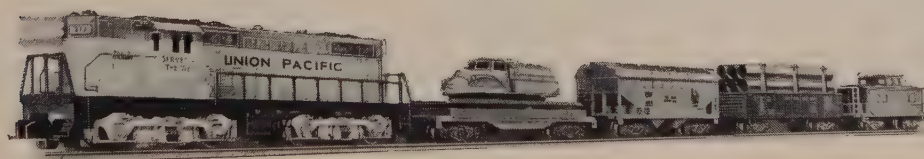
No. 5505T Atlantic Freight  
Halftone No. 8660—Line Electro No. 8661



No. 5510T Pacific Freight  
Halftone No. 8662—Line Electro No. 8663



No. 5515T Pacific Passenger  
Halftone No. 8664—Line Electro No. 8665



No. 5520T Union Pacific Diesel  
Halftone No. 8666—Line Electro No. 8667



No. 5525TBW Pacific Freight  
Halftone No. 8668—Line Electro No. 8669



These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



No. 5530TBH Silver Flash Brown Diesel Freight  
Halftone No. 8670—Line Electro No. 8671



No. 5535BH Blue Comet Diesel Passenger  
Halftone No. 8672—Line Electro No. 8673



No. 5540TBW K5 Freight  
Halftone No. 8674—Line Electro No. 8675



No. 5542H Sunshine Special Freight  
Halftone No. 8676—Line Electro No. 8677



No. 5545W Switcher Work Train  
Halftone No. 8678—Line Electro No. 8679



These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



No. 5550W Hudson Freight  
Halftone No. 8680—Line Electro No. 8681



No. 5555W Hudson Passenger  
Halftone No. 8682—Line Electro No. 8683



No. 5565W Union Pacific Freight  
Halftone No. 8684—Line Electro No. 8685



No. 5570H Green Rocket Twin Motors Pass.  
Halftone No. 8686—Line Electro No. 8687



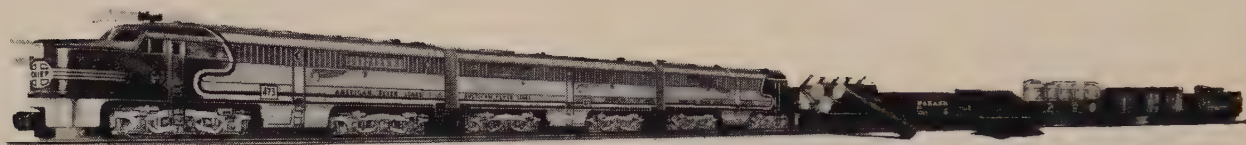
No. 5575W Union Pacific Frt. Unloading Hump  
Halftone No. 8688—Line Electro No. 8689



These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



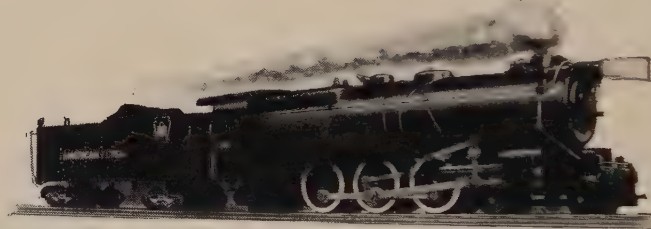
No. 5580H Santa Fe Diesel Twin Motors Pass.  
Halftone No. 8690—Line Electro No. 8691



No. 5585H Santa Fe Diesel Twin Motor Freight  
Halftone No. 8692—Line Electro No. 8693



No. 293 Pacific Locomotive  
Halftone No. 7967—Line Electro No. 7968



No. 313 Pennsylvania Locomotive  
Halftone No. 8742—Line Electro No. 8743



No. 326 Hudson Locomotive  
Halftone No. 7969—Line Electro No. 7970



No. 346 Nickel Plate Switcher  
Halftone No. 8744—Line Electro No. 8745



No. 336 Union Pacific Locomotive  
Halftone No. 7975—Line Electro No. 7976





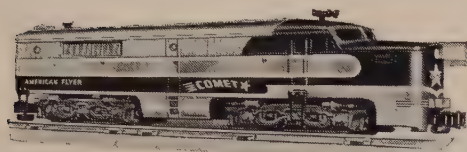
These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



No. 372 GP-7 Diesel Loco  
Halftone No. 8694—Line Electro No. 8695



No. 3745 GP-7 Twin Unit Diesel Switcher  
Halftone No. 8417—Line Electro No. 8489



No. 466 Silver Comet Diesel Locomotive  
Halftone No. 7979—Line Electro No. 7980



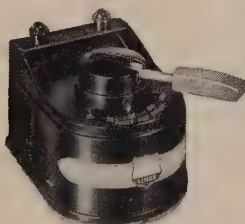
No. 4713—The Chief 3-Unit Diesel  
Halftone No. 8418—Line Electro No. 8470



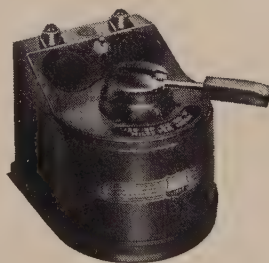
No. 4745 Silver Rocket Diesel Locomotive  
Halftone No. 7983—Line Electro No. 7984



No. 4B Transformer  
Halftone No. 8419  
Line Electro No. 8469



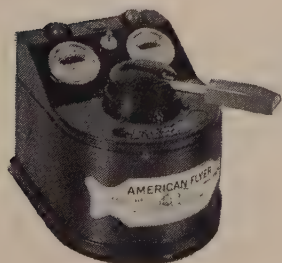
No. 15B Transformer  
Halftone No. 7988  
Line Electro No. 7987



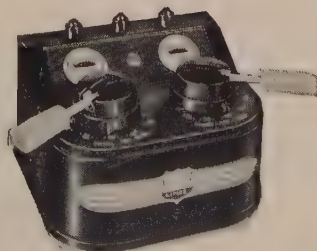
No. 16B Transformer  
Halftone No. 8507  
Line Electro No. 7990



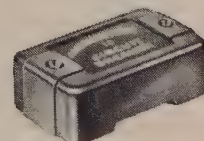
No. 18B Transformer  
Halftone No. 7991  
Line Electro No. 7992



No. 19B Transformer  
Halftone No. 6754  
Line Electro No. 6831



No. 30B Transformer  
Halftone No. 7993  
Line Electro No. 7994



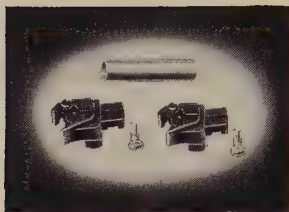
No. 13 Circuit Breaker  
Halftone No. 6747  
Line Electro No. 6820



These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



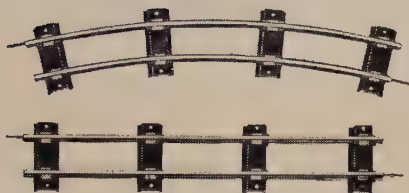
No. 690 Track Terminal  
Halftone No. 6749  
Line Electro No. 5175



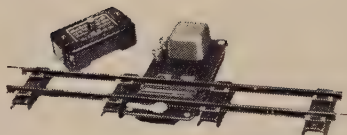
No. 520 Knuckle Coupler Kit  
Halftone No. 8392  
Line Electro No. 8393



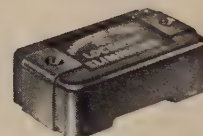
No. 695 Reverse Loop Relay  
Halftone No. 8738  
Line Electro No. 8739



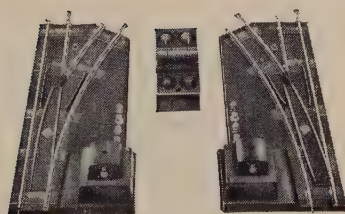
No. 700 Straight Track  
No. 702 Curved Track  
Halftone No. 8421  
Line Electro No. 6343



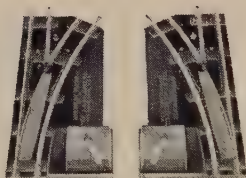
No. 706 R. C. Uncoupler  
Halftone No. 8422  
Line Electro No. 6066



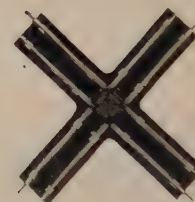
No. 709 Lock-out Eliminator  
Halftone No. 6344  
Line Electro No. 6387



No. 720A R. C. Switches  
Halftone No. 6762  
Line Electro No. 6816



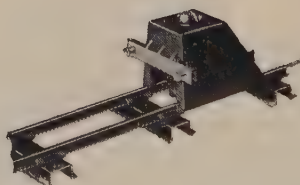
No. 722A Manual Switches  
Halftone No. 6745  
Line Electro No. 6823



No. 725 R. R. Crossing  
Halftone No. 5891  
Line Electro No. 5869



No. 726 Rubber Roadbed Straight  
No. 727 Rubber Roadbed Curved  
Halftone No. 6345  
Line Electro No. 6388



No. 730 Bumper  
Halftone No. 5982  
Line Electro No. 5976



No. 731 Pike Planner  
Halftone No. 8423  
Line Electro No. 6822



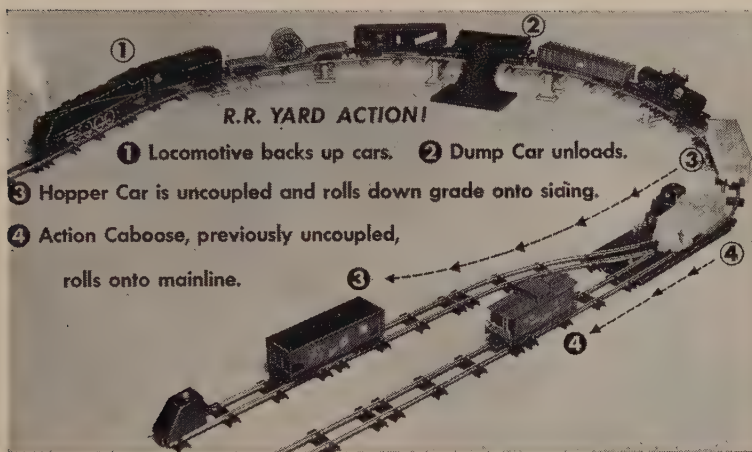
These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



No. 780 R.R. Trestle    Halftone No. 7997    Line Electro No. 8561



No. 26 Service Kit  
Halftone No. 6962  
Line Electro No. 6963



No. 784 Hump Set    Halftone No. 8740    Line Electro No. 8741



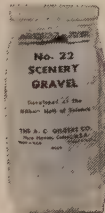
No. 27 Track Cleaning Fluid  
Halftone No. 6748  
Line Electro No. 6857



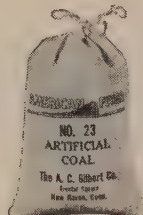
No. 249 Tunnel  
Halftone No. 8426  
Line Electro No. 4381



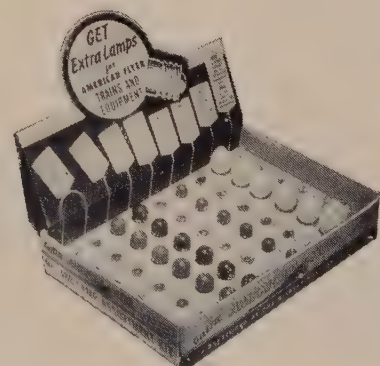
No. 21A Imitation Grass  
Halftone No. 8121  
Line Electro No. 6182



No. 22 Scenery Gravel  
Halftone No. 8122  
Line Electro No. 6181



No. 23 Artificial Coal  
Halftone No. 8123  
Line Electro No. 6180



No. 460 Lamp Assortment  
Halftone No. 6600



No. 24 Rainbow Wire  
Halftone No. 8424  
Line Electro No. 6179



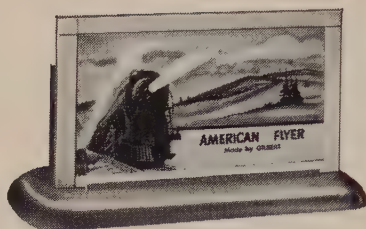
No. 25 Smoke Cartridges  
Halftone No. 8508  
Line Electro No. 8471



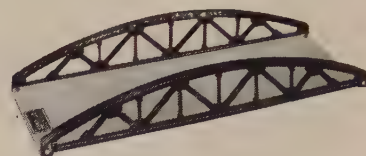
These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



No. 561 Billboard Horn  
Halftone No. 6410  
Line Electro No. 6366



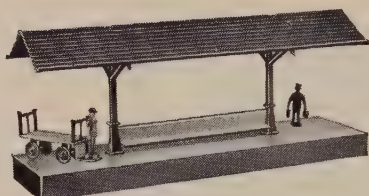
No. 566 Remote Control Whistle  
Halftone No. 8696  
Line Electro No. 8697



No. 571 Truss Bridge  
Halftone No. 8698  
Line Electro No. 8699



No. 581 Girder Bridge  
Halftone No. 6998  
Line Electro No. 6999



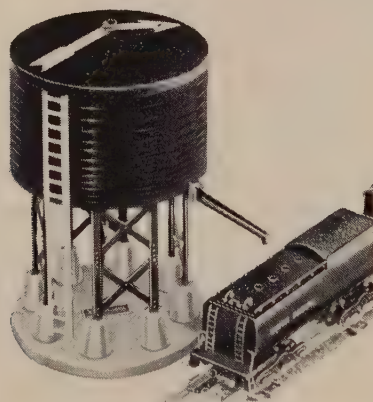
No. 586F Wayside Station  
Halftone No. 6771  
Line Electro No. 5613



No. 589 Station  
Halftone No. 6768  
Line Electro No. 4866



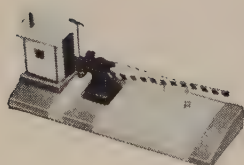
No. 590 Signal Tower  
Halftone No. 8700  
Line Electro No. 8701



No. 596 Water Tank  
Halftone No. 6790  
Line Electro No. 5238



No. 742 Hand Car  
Halftone No. 8746  
Line Electro No. 8747



No. 600 Crossing Gate  
Halftone No. 7000  
Line Electro No. 7001



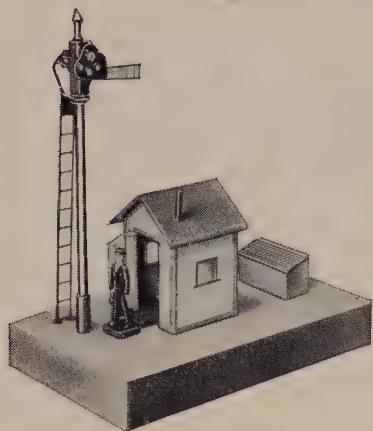
No. 598 Talking St. Record  
Halftone No. 6744



No. 750 Trestle Bridge  
Halftone No. 7907  
Line Electro No. 5604



These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



No. 758A "Sam, Semaphore Man"  
Halftone No. 6767  
Line Electro No. 6174



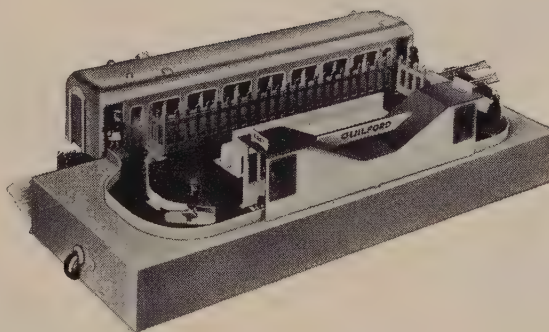
No. 759 Bell Danger Signal  
Halftone No. 7908  
Line Electro No. 7909



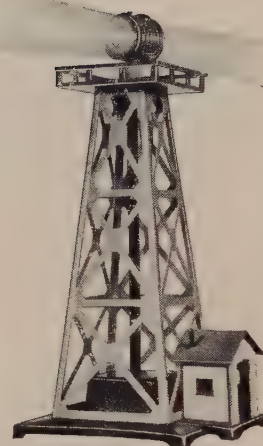
No. 760 Flasher Signal  
Halftone No. 6765  
Line Electro No. 6175



No. 761 Semaphore  
Halftone No. 6791  
Line Electro No. 6184



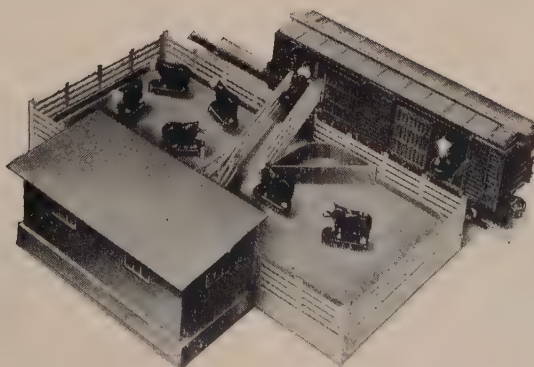
No. K766 Animated Station & Operating Car  
Halftone No. 7912  
Line Electro No. 7913



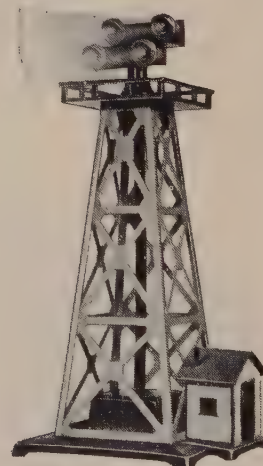
769A Revolving  
Airplane Beacon  
Halftone No. 7914  
Line Electro No. 7915



No. 772 Water Tower  
Halftone No. 8003  
Line Electro No. 8004



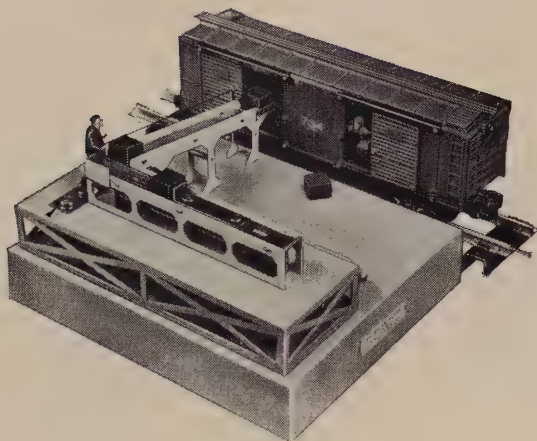
No. K771 Operating Stockyard & Car  
Halftone No. 8001—Line Electro No. 8002



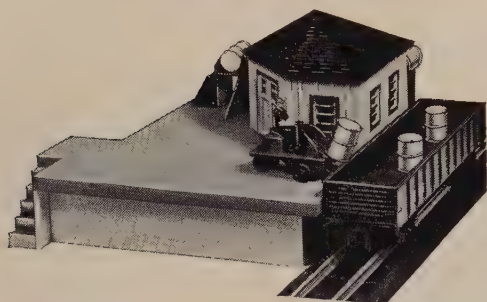
No. 774 Floodlight Tower  
Halftone No. 8005  
Line Electro No. 8006



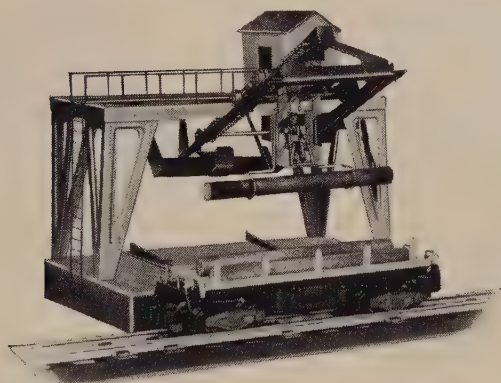
These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



K775 Loading Platform & Car  
Halftone No. 8009  
Line Electro No. 8010



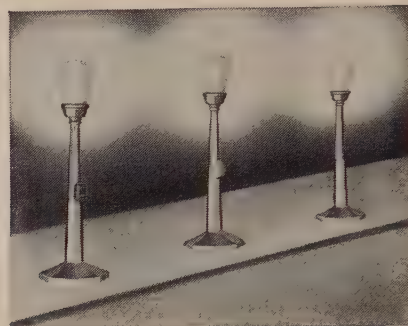
No. 779 Oil Drum Loader  
Halftone No. 8702  
Line Electro No. 8703



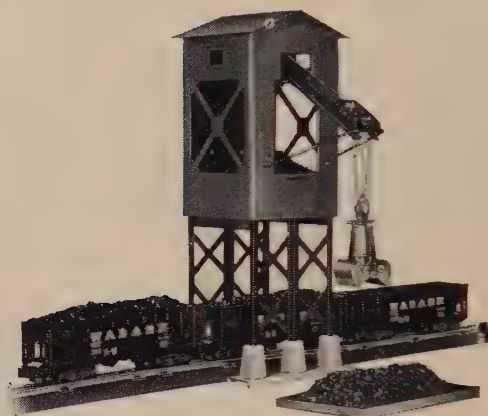
No. 787 Log Loader  
Halftone No. 8706  
Line Electro No. 8707



No. 793 Union Station  
Halftone No. 8708  
Line Electro No. 8709



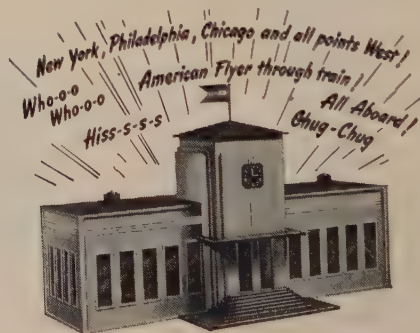
No. 778 Set of  
3 Street Lights  
Halftone No. 8011  
Line Electro No. 8012



No. 785 Coal Loader  
Halftone No. 8704—Line Electro No. 8705



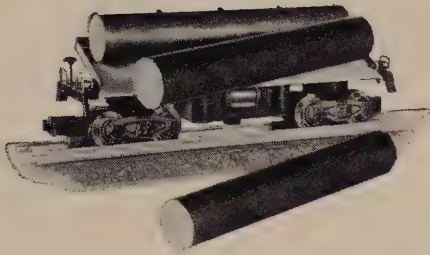
No. 792 R. R. Terminal  
Halftone No. 8427—Line Electro No. 8472



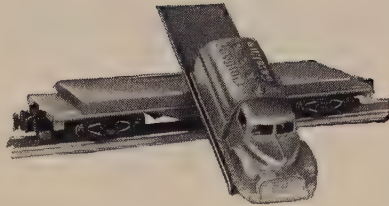
No. 799 Talking Station  
Halftone No. 8559  
Line Electro No. 8560



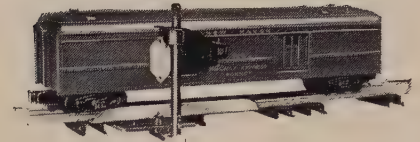
These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



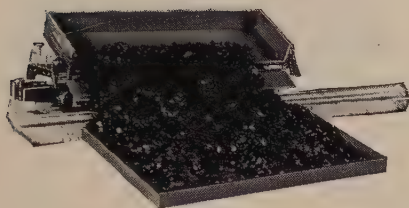
No. 914 Auto Log Unloading Car  
Halftone No. 8013  
Line Electro No. 8014



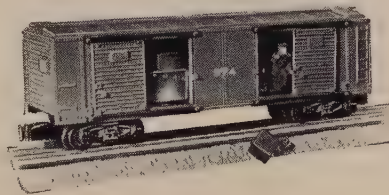
No. 915 Unloading Car  
Halftone No. 8710  
Line Electro No. 8711



No. 918 Mail Pick-up Car  
Halftone No. 8017  
Line Electro No. 8018



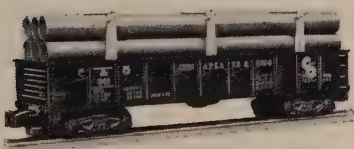
No. 919 New Auto Dump Car  
Halftone No. 8019  
Line Electro No. 8020



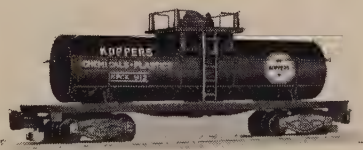
No. 974 Operating Box Car  
Halftone No. 8023  
Line Electro No. 8024



No. 977 Action Caboose  
Halftone No. 8712  
Line Electro No. 8713



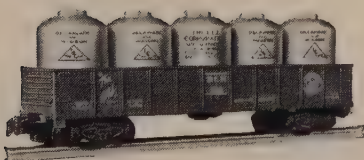
No. 911 Pipe Car  
Halftone No. 8714  
Line Electro No. 8715



No. 912 Chemical Car  
Halftone No. 8716  
Line Electro No. 8717



No. 913 GN. Box Car  
Halftone No. 8025  
Line Electro No. 8026



No. 916 Container Gondola  
Halftone No. 8718  
Line Electro No. 8719



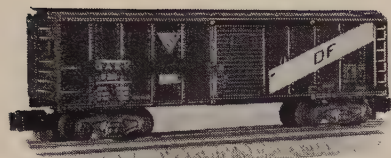
No. 920 Southern Gondola  
Halftone No. 8027  
Line Electro No. 8028



No. 921 C.B.&Q. Hopper Car  
Halftone No. 8029  
Line Electro No. 8030



These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



No. 922 GAEX Box Car  
Halftone No. 8031  
Line Electro No. 8032



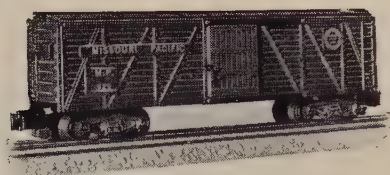
No. 924 Cement Car  
Halftone No. 8033  
Line Electro No. 8034



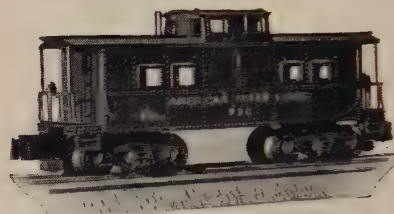
No. 925 Tank Car  
Halftone No. 8035  
Line Electro No. 8036



No. 926 3-dome Tank Car  
Halftone No. 8720  
Line Electro No. 8721



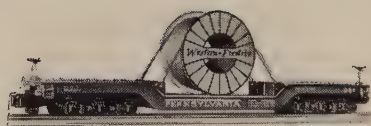
No. 929 Cattle Car  
Halftone No. 8039  
Line Electro No. 8040



No. 930 Caboose  
Halftone No. 8041  
Line Electro No. 8042



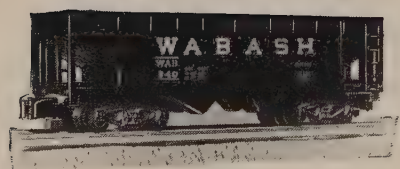
No. 931 Gondola  
Halftone No. 8043  
Line Electro No. 8044



No. 936 Depressed Center  
Halftone No. 8722  
Line Electro No. 8723



No. 937 M.K.T. Box Car  
Halftone No. 8053  
Line Electro No. 8054



No. 940 Wabash Hopper—black  
Halftone No. 8055  
Line Electro No. 8056



No. 941 Frisco Gondola  
Halftone No. 8057  
Line Electro No. 8058



No. 944 Wrecking Crane Car  
Halftone No. 8061  
Line Electro No. 8062



These American Flyer halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



No. 945 Comb. Boom & Work Car  
Halftone No. 8063  
Line Electro No. 8064



No. 946 Power Floodlight Car  
Halftone No. 8065  
Line Electro No. 8066



No. 947 Refrigerator Car  
Halftone No. 8067  
Line Electro No. 8068



No. 948 Track Cleaning Car  
Halftone No. 8069  
Line Electro No. 8070



No. 951 Baggage  
Halftone No. 8073  
Line Electro No. 8074



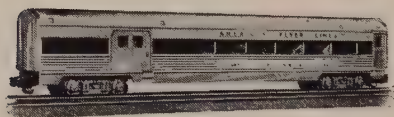
No. 952 Pullman  
Halftone No. 8724  
Line Electro No. 8725



No. 953 Baggage & Club  
Halftone No. 8726  
Line Electro No. 8727



No. 954 Observation  
Halftone No. 8728  
Line Electro No. 8729



No. 960 Baggage & Club Car  
Halftone No. 8730  
Line Electro No. 8731



No. 961 Coach  
Halftone No. 8732  
Line Electro No. 8733



No. 962 Vista Dome Pullman  
Halftone No. 8734  
Line Electro No. 8735



No. 963 Observation Car  
Halftone No. 8736  
Line Electro No. 8737



# GILBERT® TOYS

These Gilbert Toy halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



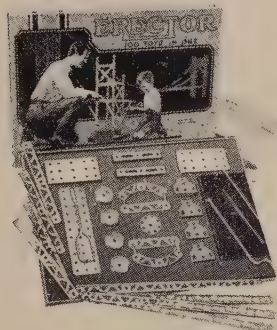
No. 2 Junior Erector  
Halftone No. 6715  
Line Electro No. 6634



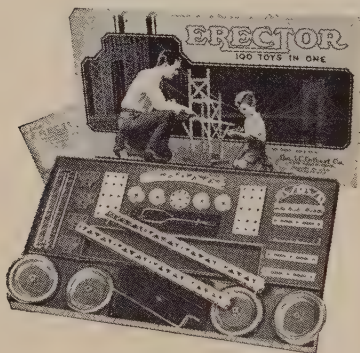
No. 4 Junior Erector  
Halftone No. 6614  
Line Electro No. 6635



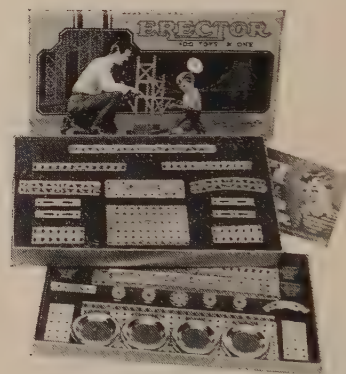
No. 10 Junior Erector  
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Line Electro No. 6636



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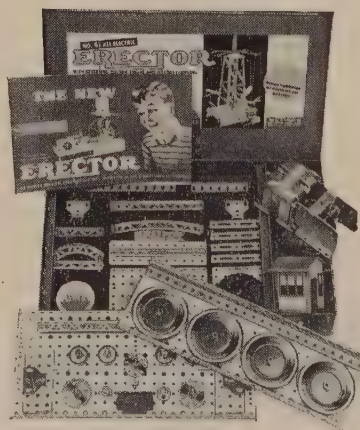
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No. 3 1/2 Erector  
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Line Electro No. 8618



No. 4 1/2 Erector  
Halftone No. 8619  
Line Electro No. 8620



No. 6 1/2 Erector  
Halftone No. 8621  
Line Electro No. 8622



No. 7 1/2 Erector  
Halftone No. 8436  
Line Electro No. 8480

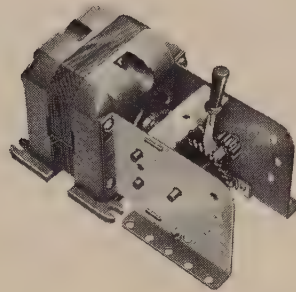


# GILBERT® TOYS

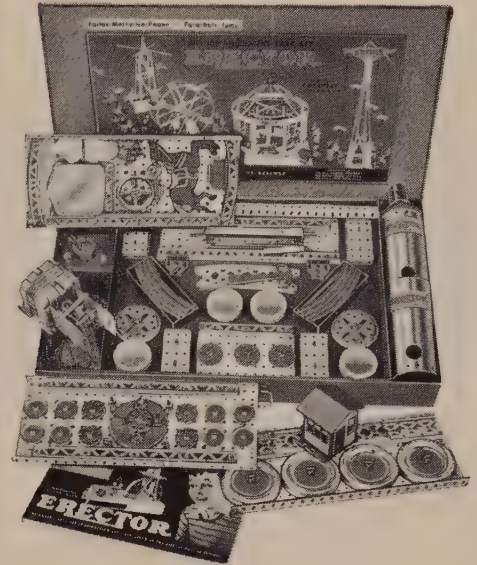
These Gilbert Toy halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



No. 8 1/2 Erector  
Halftone No. 8437  
Line Electro No. 6861



A49 Erector Engine  
Halftone No. 8751  
Line Electro No. 8752



No. 10 1/2 Erector  
Halftone No. 8438  
Line Electro No. 8481



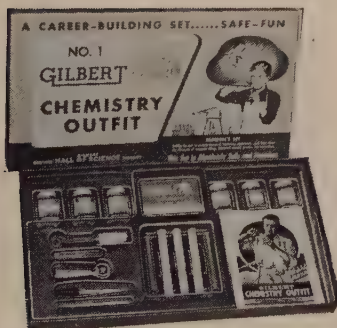
No. 5 Anchor Blocks  
Halftone No. 8093  
Line Electro No. 8094



No. 7 Anchor Blocks  
Halftone No. 8095  
Line Electro No. 8096



No. 11 Anchor Blocks  
Halftone No. 8097  
Line Electro No. 8098



No. 1 Chemistry  
Halftone No. 8623  
Line Electro No. 8624



No. 5 Chemistry Set  
Halftone No. 8625  
Line Electro No. 8626



No. 12 Chemistry Set  
Halftone No. 8627  
Line Electro No. 8628

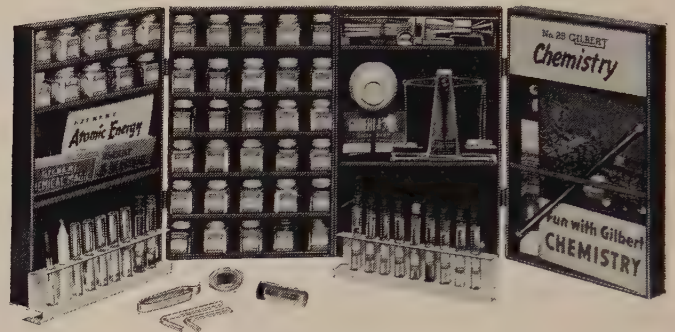


# GILBERT® TOYS

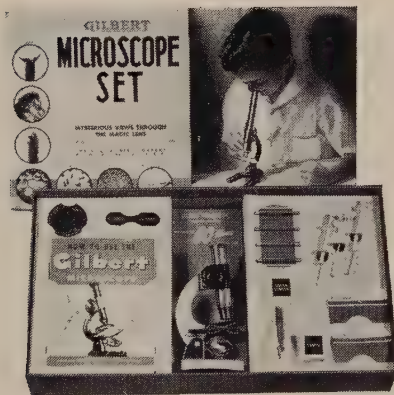
These Gilbert Toy halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



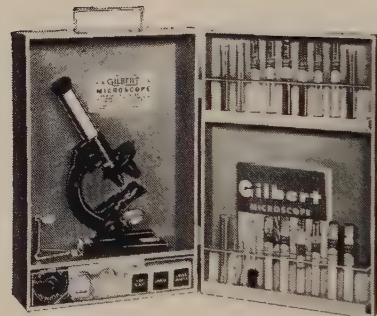
No. 14 Chemistry Set  
Halftone No. 8629  
Line Electro No. 8630



No. 25 Chemistry Set  
Halftone No. 8631  
Line Electro No. 8632



No. 5 Microscope  
Halftone No. 8446  
Line Electro No. 6609



No. 9 Microscope Set  
Halftone No. 8633  
Line Electro No. 8634



No. 21 Microscope Set  
Halftone No. 8635  
Line Electro No. 8636



No. S-7 Microscope  
Halftone No. 8637  
Line Electro No. 8638



No. S-16 Microscope  
Halftone No. 8639  
Line Electro No. 8640



# GILBERT® TOYS

These Gilbert Toy halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



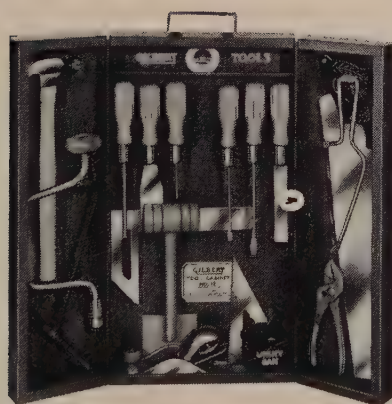
No. 3 Tool Chest  
Halftone No. 8641  
Line Electro No. 8642



No. 5 Tool Chest  
Halftone No. 8643  
Line Electro No. 8644



No. 8 Tool Chest  
Halftone No. 8645  
Line Electro No. 8646



No. 12 Tool Chest  
Halftone No. 8647  
Line Electro No. 8648



No. 16 Tool Chest  
Halftone No. 8649  
Line Electro No. 8650



# GILBERT® TOYS

These Gilbert Toy halftone electrotypes are also available in line (ink drawings) in the sizes shown below. Please order by number and specify line or halftone.



No. 1½ Magic Set  
Halftone No. 8651  
Line Electro No. 8652



No. 2½ Magic Set  
Halftone No. 8653  
Line Electro No. 8655



No. 3 Fun with Electricity Set  
Halftone No. 8656  
Line Electro No. 8657



No. 1032 Puzzle Set  
Halftone No. 8447  
Line Electro No. 8490



No. 1033 Puzzle Set  
Halftone No. 8448  
Line Electro No. 8491



No. 1034 Puzzle Set  
Halftone No. 8113  
Line Electro No. 8114



# AF dealer displays

*"Designed as the central unit for an American Flyer display, it vividly portrays the glory of railroading and gives special emphasis to the more important American Flyer features."—Description of the #250 display.*



Gilbert offered many different displays to help sell American Flyer trains, ranging from small paper signs to full operating layouts. The American Flyer Step Display #100 consisted of two sets of steps, each five feet long. The steps could either be set up back to back or end to end. Approximately 10 train sets could be displayed on it, with trains running around it if the steps were set up back to back. The #100 display was available from 1946 through at least 1948.

The #250 Spectacular AF Animated Train Display was 12 feet wide. The central illustration is an adaptation of the famous "Boys-at-the-Crossing Gate" photograph featured on the cover of the AF 1946-1948 catalogs. A headlight in the engine, flashing lights in the crossing signal and an electric motor activated crossing gate added to the excitement.

"Train sets should have the couplers hooked up and the cars in identically the same order as shown in the catalog. This will help customers identify the trains in the catalog or in American Flyer national advertising," advised the display literature. Stores were urged to build their own "Gilbert Hall of Science" to "give your store special prestige in the eyes of customers," and help in "building up your reputation for leadership." Combinations of four basic shelving and counter units were put together to build the "Hall of Science."

## NORTHERN BANNER

In 1951 the #200 American Flyer Display was issued. It was a 24" high by 29" wide cardboard reproduction of the now famous "Boys-at-the-Crossing Gate." A six-foot banner showing the 332AC UP Northern was also available.

By 1953 the dealer displays had taken on a new dimension. Operating landscaped layouts were offered which displayed accessories and trains. The largest and most expensive of these was the #300 Self-Liquidating

Action Train Display. "Self-liquidating" was a gimmick which would allow the dealer to recoup the \$287.35 cost of the display by selling the trains, track, accessories, roadbed and transformers. The #300 came with train sets K5375W and K5358W. The year 1953 also saw displays numbered 25, 35, 122, 133 and 150, none of which came with train sets.

The #790 Trainorama was also issued in 1953. A sales brochure (D1706) indicates that Trainorama was to be sold as #791 at a retail price of \$9.95, but they have only been known to come in "dealer special" sets. Although it was not really a dealer display, it was the closest thing to a dealer display that was available to the consumer. Trainorama was 15" high by 90" long, and came in five separate sections.

The largest display for 1954 was the #400 Self-Liquidating Action Train Display, which measured 8'x8'. Two train sets and a miner's work train could be operated at one time. A new #250 display (5'x9') was brought out along with a #175 display. A new item was the No. 18 Illuminated Sign, which is still seen in many train stores. It has an illuminated picture of a 322 Hudson set on the front.

## ACTION DISPLAY

The #401 Action Display came with three sets to use as operating trains—5505T, 5580H, and 5525TBW. It was an 8'x8' display. The D1794 and D1794A catalogs show that there had been some problems in pricing the train sets, because they varied in price—5580H going from \$69.95 to \$74.95, and 5525TBW going from \$42.95 to \$39.95. New displays #351 with 5570H set, #301, #176, #251, and #151 were also listed.

By 1957 five-digit numbers had taken over. Displays 28111 and 28112

were designed to be used separately or together—#28111 was a shelf unit and #28112 a table and layout unit. There was a #28113 and the largest was a 5'x9' #28114. Three posters were produced. Two were 21¼"x6¼" and one was 6½"x3½".

HO and S were featured together on one of the 1959 displays. It was numbered 28161 and had a lower level S layout with an upper level HO layout. Displays #28135, #28136, #28139, #28141, #28142, and #28143 were available at prices ranging from \$17.00 to \$198.00. The #26611 Four Level Action Display, which consisted of cardboard trestles, permitted four trains to be run on four separate circles of track stacked one above the other. This display can still be found, because quite a few dealers had them. They were offered for several years and cost only \$3.00. A dealer could also obtain one free by ordering four "Frontiersman" train sets from his distributor.

Two more cardboard displays were added in 1960. The #28185 Wayside Station was 40" wide by 13" deep by 41" high and cost \$5.00. The #28184 Full Color Counter Display held a locomotive and five cars on "two levels with tunnels at ends to give a realistic impression of a train winding around mountain grades." Displays #28167 combination HO and S, #28168, #28135 "Badlands" to display the Frontiersman set, and #28176 incorporating the 2661 four-level display were available. A September 1960 "Flyergram" offered the #28184 display free to dealers sending a return coupon.

Pikemaster track was used on all 1961 displays. The largest was #28235 "World of Transportation" which utilized HO, S and Autorama. Numbers 28179 and 28230 were also new. A new method of displaying trains was the #20706 Bubble Pack Train Display. The #20705 S gauge Casey Jones set was displayed on a 25"x35" card with each piece of the set in a separate plastic blister.

Two additional blister pack sets rounded out the displays for 1963. The #20761 at \$7.50 contained the #20763 set and the #20801 display contained the Game Train at \$10.00.

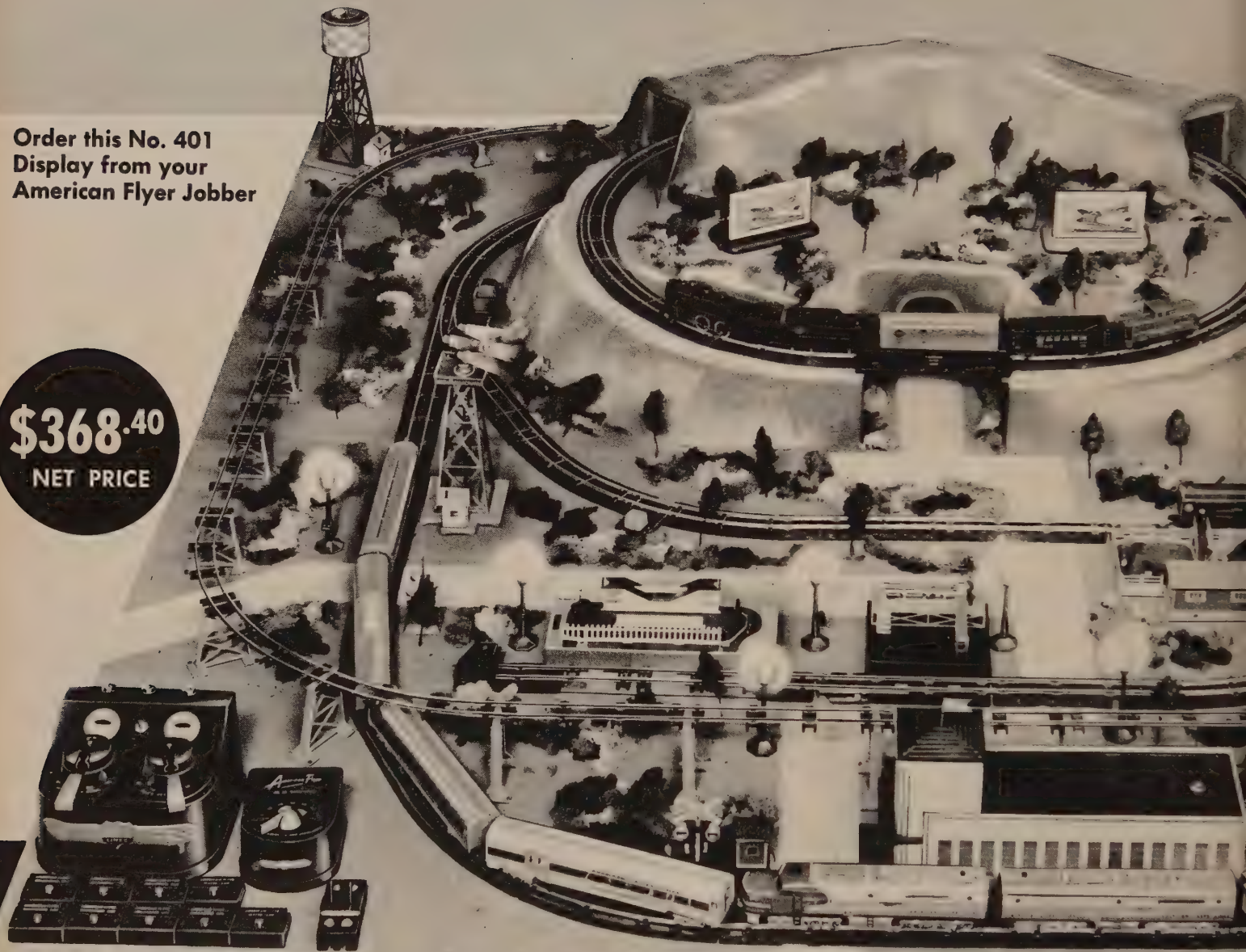


# AMERICAN FLYER

## No. 401 Action Display

Order this No. 401  
Display from your  
American Flyer Jobber

**\$368.40**  
NET PRICE



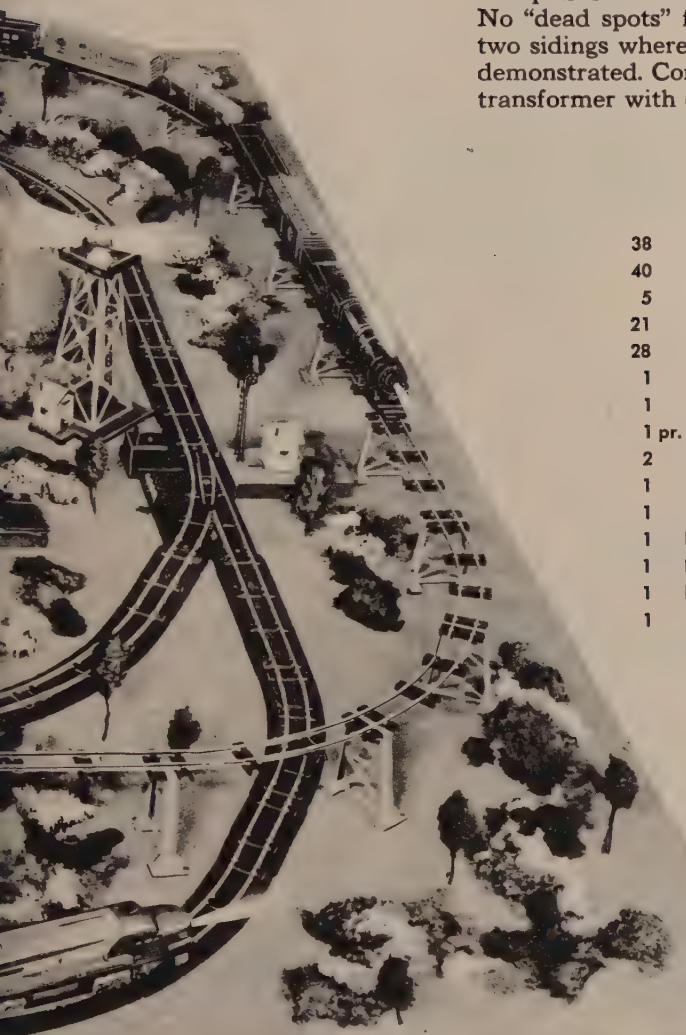
- MEASURES 8 FEET SQUARE — SHIPPED IN 4 X 8 FOOT SECTIONS
- DISPLAY FULLY WIRED, READY TO SET UP AND OPERATE. PACKED IN WOODEN CRATES
- CONSTRUCTED OF TOP-GRADE WOOD, BEAUTIFULLY LANDSCAPED
- INCLUDES ALL TRAIN SETS SHOWN ABOVE
- COMPLETE WITH 7 INTERESTING ACTION ACCESSORIES



# Stop Your Customers — and SELL Them — with this Magnificent Train Display!

*Your Entire Investment — plus a PROFIT —  
is Returned after the Selling Season!*

Watch this exciting 8-foot square American Flyer train display stop the crowds in your toy department — and *hold* them. Designed not only for maximum interest but also to show American Flyer's many selling features. Laid out with three track levels; trestle grade dramatically points up amazing climbing ability of American Flyer locomotives. Display has 7 action accessories, including new Talking Station which can be heard considerable distance. Display is ideal when set up as island because visibility is assured from all sides, even for small children. No "dead spots" from any angle. Besides 60 feet of mainline track, layout has two sidings where Stock Yard, Animated Station and Baggage Unloader can be demonstrated. Control panel features total of 400 watts of power, including 30B transformer with exclusive "Dead Man's Control." Price net, F.O.B. New Haven.



## No. 401 8 x 8 DELUXE DISPLAY

|       |      |                         |         |   |         |                           |       |
|-------|------|-------------------------|---------|---|---------|---------------------------|-------|
| 38    | 700  | Straight Track          | \$ 9.50 | 1 | 561     | Diesel Horn               | 6.95  |
| 40    | 702  | Curved Track            | 10.00   | 1 | 772     | Water Tower               | 3.95  |
| 5     | 701  | ½ Sec. Straight Track   | 1.25    | 1 | 769A    | Aircraft Beacon           | 3.50  |
| 21    | 726  | Straight Rubber Roadbed | 5.25    | 1 | 581     | Girder Bridge             | 1.95  |
| 28    | 727  | Curved Rubber Roadbed   | 7.00    | 1 | 774     | Floodlight Tower          | 4.95  |
| 1     | 780  | Trestle Set             | 7.95    | 1 | 760     | Highway Flasher           | 2.95  |
| 1     | 783  | Trestle Set             | 4.95    | 1 | 759     | Bell Danger Signal        | 4.95  |
| 1 pr. | 720A | Switches                | 15.95   | 2 | 778     | Sets of Street Lights     | 5.90  |
| 2     | 730  | Bumpers                 | 3.00    | 1 | 758A    | Sam, the Semaphore Man    | 8.95  |
| 1     | 706  | Uncoupler               | 3.00    | 1 | 30B     | Transformer               | 34.95 |
| 1     | 799  | Talking Station         | 19.95   | 1 | 4B      | Transformer               | 9.95  |
| 1     | K771 | Stock Yard & Car        | 14.95   | 1 | 5505T   | Atlantic Freight Train    | 24.95 |
| 1     | K766 | Animated Station & Car  | 14.95   | 1 | 5580H   | Santa Fe Diesel Passenger |       |
| 1     | K775 | Loading Platform & Car  | 14.95   |   |         | Train                     | 74.95 |
| 1     | 566  | Whistle                 | 6.95    | 1 | 5525TBW | Pacific Freight Train     | 39.95 |

Total merchandise at list: \$368.40

**ALL THREE TRAIN SETS SHOWN ARE  
INCLUDED WITH THE No. 401 DISPLAY**

**DISPLAY IS 100% SELF-LIQUIDATING —  
YOUR INVESTMENT RETURNED PLUS A PROFIT!**

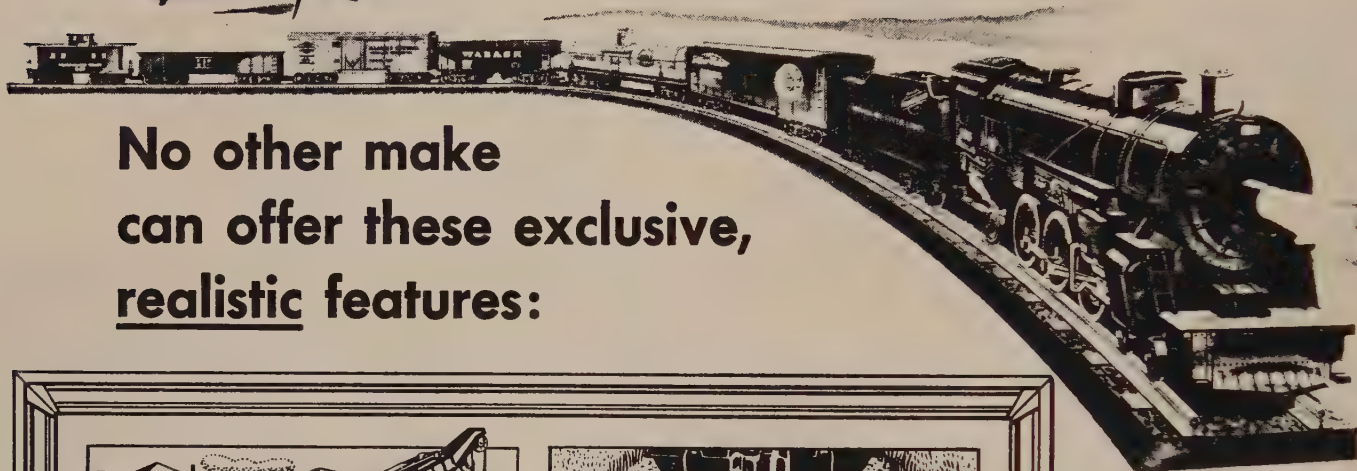
Amazing but true! You not only have an action display that sells American Flyer as nothing else will, but you also recapture your money and realize a profit. When you sell merchandise listed below at end of Christmas season, your entire investment is returned. The display hasn't cost you a penny. You can then sell the 8 foot layout to a model railroad enthusiast — and make a good profit.

- HAS THREE TRACK LEVELS; TRESTLE GRADE SHOWS AMERICAN FLYER CLIMBING ABILITY
- TALKING STATION SOUND DRAWS CROWDS FROM GREAT DISTANCE
- MAKES IDEAL ISLAND DISPLAY; CAN BE SEEN FROM ALL SIDES BY ALL AGES
- 70 FEET OF 2-RAIL TRACK

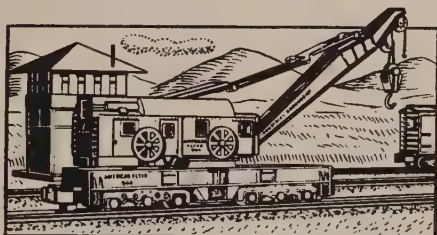


Want realistic model railroading?

Choose **GILBERT** *American Flyer* Trains



No other make  
can offer these exclusive,  
realistic features:



**TRUE SCALE MODELS.** More realistic. Every 3/16" equals one foot of real train. Not stubby and toylike, as are other makes. Above: Note the realism of the massive Operating Wrecking Crane (No. 944).



**REALISTIC TWO-RAIL TRACK.** "T" shaped with flat surface for better traction. Only American Flyer has it! Exclusive: rubber roadbed for realistic, *quiet* operation. Curved, No. 727; Straight, No. 726.

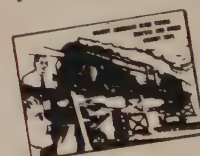


**REAL SMOKE AND "CHOO-CHOO" SOUND.** White smoke features "firebox glow." Locomotive "choo-choos" in time with driving wheels. Above: 16-wheel "Challenger." Hauls trains K5357W (Passenger), K5358W (Freight).



**PULL-MOR FOR POWER.** American Flyer exclusive! Pull-Mor Power means locomotives take 30-degree grades, haul over 40 cars! Three-unit Diesel climbs part of new American Flyer trestle set (No. 780).

**ALL** American Flyer locomotives star the efficient worm-drive motor for power and greater pulling capacity. Fool-proof knuckle couplers are featured. And every train is built to Gilbert standards of ruggedness and dependability. Many new accessories for '54, too! See the mighty American Flyer line in action at your dealer's today. Take Dad along!



**SEND FOR BIG  
TRAIN BOOK—10c**

Made by A. C. Gilbert Company,  
makers of famous Gilbert Erector, Microscope  
Sets, Chemistry Sets, and Tool Chests.

Gilbert Hall of Science  
108 Erector Square, New Haven 6, Conn.  
I enclose 10c in coin. Please rush me 48-  
page American Flyer train catalog in color.  
Includes Erector, Chemistry sets, etc.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Zone \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_



# Our Greatest Buy in a "Just Like Real" ELECTRIC TRAIN



**Famous American Flyer**  
No. 4904T, Pacific 3-Car Freight  
Train Set. 22 pieces. 40½" long.  
Track makes 140° oval.

Don't confuse this handsome scale model with less realistic trains. The smoke is actually puffed out under pressure. The faster the train goes, the more smoke it puffs. The realistic-sounding "choo-choo" noises also change tone and tempo with every change in train speed. 3 realistic cars are in brilliant, never-fade colors. Cars can be uncoupled by electric remote control—couple automatically anywhere. A wonderful value.

## ADDITIONAL FEATURES

- ★ Remote control
- ★ Heavy die-cast locomotive and tender
- ★ Superpower worm drive
- ★ Lucite electric headlight
- ★ Automatic coupling
- ★ Electric uncoupling
- ★ Powered by famous Gilbert Electric Motor

Lowest price anywhere for a fine scale model with real 2-rail "T" track—real smoke synchronized with train speed—realistic "choo-choo" sounds synchronized with train speed. Complete with 75-watt transformer.

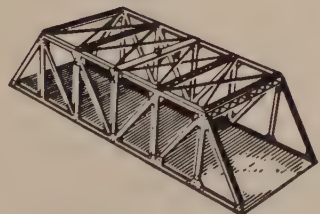
**\$29<sup>95</sup>**



No. 25 Smoke Cartridge  
Order Mat No. 6497



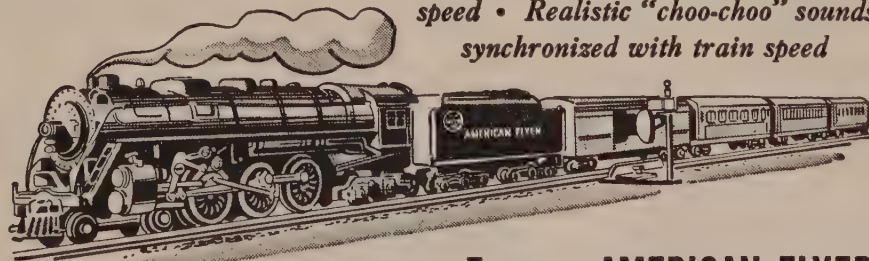
No. 720A R.C. Switches  
No. 722 Manual Switches  
Order Mat No. 6498



No. 754 Double Bridge  
Order Mat No. 6455

## N. Y. Central Scale Model Passenger with Exciting Mail Pick-Up Car

Runs on real 2-rail "T" track • Real smoke synchronized with train speed • Realistic "choo-choo" sounds synchronized with train speed



**Famous AMERICAN FLYER**  
No. 4914A N.Y. Central 4-car Passenger Train. 27 pieces. 65" long. Track makes 160° oval. .... **\$34<sup>95</sup>**

## ALL THESE fine train features

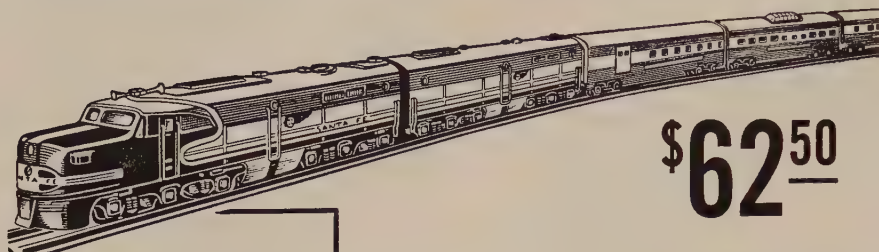
- ★ Remote control
- ★ Heavy die-cast locomotive and tender
- ★ Superpower worm drive
- ★ Lucite electric headlight
- ★ Realistic illuminated coaches
- ★ Automatic coupling
- ★ Electric uncoupling
- ★ Powered by famous Gilbert electric motor

There's never-ending fun in operating this sleek passenger train. Press a remote control button and a metal arm reaches out from the mail car and grabs up a sack of mail. At the same time a second mail sack is tossed from car to ground. Locomotive puffs real smoke and gives off realistic "choo-choo" sounds. Both smoke and "choo-choo" sounds increase or decrease automatically with every change in train speed. Cars can be uncoupled by electric remote control—couple anywhere on track.



# SUPERB NEW SANTA FE DIESEL PASSENGER TRAIN

*Latest American Flyer Masterpiece with Electronic Horn  
—3 aluminum cars, including Vista Dome Pullman*



**TRAIN NO. 5008**  
Over 5 feet long—with

- ★ Santa Fe Diesel "A" Unit with Twin Motors
- ★ Santa Fe Diesel "B" Unit
- ★ 3 Ultra modern aluminum cars
- ★ Real 2-rail track, making 160" oval
- ★ Built-in, remote control Electronic Horn

**\$62<sup>50</sup>**

Undoubtedly the most magnificent passenger train we have ever handled. A true replica of the most modern streamlined beauties. "A" and "B" locomotive units are 23¾" long, made to scale from Alco blueprints. Finished in realistic silver with colorful Santa Fe markings. Ventilators, louvers, shutters in beautiful, authentic detail. Two Gilbert motors provide abundance of speed and power. Observation car is latest design with illuminated name plate and red tail light.



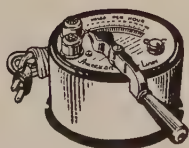
No. 717 Log Unloading Car  
Order Mat No. 5998



No. 752 Auto. Coal Loader  
Order Mat No. 6000



No. 589 Pass. & Frt. Station  
Order Mat No. 5999



No. 8B Transformer  
Order Mat No. 5408

# AMERICAN FLYER GIANT SANTA FE DIESEL FREIGHT

*With Built-in Electronic Horn and 4 Thrilling Cars*



**\$57<sup>50</sup>**

**Train No. 5007**  
Over 5 feet long—with

- ★ Santa Fe Diesel "A" Unit with Twin Motors
- ★ Santa Fe Diesel "B" Unit
- ★ Operating Baggage Car
- ★ Girder Car with Realistic Girder
- ★ Depressed Center Flat Car with Cable
- ★ Illuminated Caboose
- ★ Real 2-rail track, making 160" oval

One of the finest freight outfits ever created. "A" and "B" locomotive units are 23¾" long, made to scale from Alco blueprints. Finished in realistic silver with colorful Santa Fe markings. Ventilators, exhaust stacks, louvers, shutters, etc. authentic in detail. Two Gilbert motors provide abundance of speed and power. Remote control, realistic Electronic Horn. New Operating Baggage Car carries boxes from one door to second door, where baggageman tosses them out.



★  
1948  
LINE  
★



GILBERT SCIENTIFIC TOYS  
**ERECTOR**

★  
Developed  
at the  
Gilbert  
Hall of  
Science  
★

# Display Suggestions for Retail Stores

★ ★ **C O N T E N T S** ★ ★

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| Spectacular American Flyer Animated Train Display . . . . .            | page 5  |
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★ ★ ★

Additional copies of this book will be furnished without charge upon request. Address: Sales Promotion Dept. The A. C. Gilbert Company, Erector Square, New Haven, Conn.



# HOW TO DISPLAY TOYS FOR BETTER PROFITS

The first step in planning your toy display is to decide which toys should be given the most prominent display locations.

It is generally recognized that the best merchandising practice is to *show fast-selling, higher priced toys first*. There are several practical reasons for this rule.



First, it is better showmanship and builds larger traffic for your toy department. For example, the No. 4607A or No. 4611A American Flyer Freight Trains that puff smoke and reproduce "choo-choo" sound effects are far more spectacular and will make your store more talked about than the No. 48T, which does not have these two features.

But the more important reason for giving fast-selling, higher priced toys key display locations is that this is the surest way to increase your *dollar profits* and end the season without carrying over expensive items.

Note the emphasis on the words "dollar profits." The percentage mark-up on most toys is about the same. But rent, wages and other operating expenses are paid in *dollars*, and the more high priced toys you sell, the easier it is for your store to show a satisfactory *dollar profit*.



Using valuable display locations for low priced toys simply means that you are short-changing yourself. It results in selling \$2.00 and \$3.00 toys to many people who could and should have been sold a \$10.00 or more expensive toy.

Consider the merchandising of Erector, for example. Feature the 4½ Erector and it may look so attractive that the customer will buy it without looking further. But feature the No. 8½ Erector in your display, instruct sales people to point out its all-electric features and extra play value—and even if it costs more than the customer intended to pay, there is an excellent chance of selling the No. 8½ and *tripling your dollar profit*.

Naturally, some customers can afford only inexpensive toys. But they will find such toys even if they are on rear and side counters. The main point is that as a *basic policy*, it is far more profitable to use your best locations for well-known dollar builders.

Just one more point. Toys in the higher price ranges cannot be expected to increase your dollar profits unless they are also "fast-selling." That means they must have wide acceptance.



No other toys have been so well known for so many years as those developed at the Gilbert Hall of Science. They have been nationally advertised for over a third of a century. This year American Flyer Trains will be advertised in more than 30 leading magazines and the Sunday Comic sections of 59 newspapers. Erector will be supported by a similar advertising program. The total number of Gilbert advertising messages this year will exceed 200,000,000.

While Gilbert advertising covers all Gilbert toys, certain sets or models are always given special emphasis. It is to your advantage to feature in your displays the particularly "hot" items. The list for this year is given in the following table.



# FEATURE TOYS FROM THE GILBERT HALL OF SCIENCE

Items marked with a star (★) are specifically featured in Gilbert national advertising. All are fast-selling, higher priced toys with special features that make them ideally suited for main display locations.



## AMERICAN FLYER TRAINS

★No. 4611A New York Central Freight

★No. 4607A Pennsylvania Freight

No. 4620A New York Central Freight  
with Coal Loader

No. 4619A Pennsylvania Freight with  
Log Loader

★No. 755 Talking Railroad Station

★No. 577 Billboard Whistle

No. 751 Automatic Log Loader

No. 752 Automatic Coal Loader

No. 588 Automatic Semaphore

No. 589 Passenger and Freight Station

No. 581 Girder Bridge

No. 715 Unloading Car

No. 718 Mail Pick-Up Car

## GILBERT CHEMISTRY SETS

★No. 6 Chemistry — Senior Laboratory

No. 10 Chemistry — Inventor's Laboratory

## GILBERT MICROSCOPE SETS

No. 10 Microscope Set

## OTHER GILBERT SCIENTIFIC TOYS...

Tool Chest

Erector-Brik

Mysto Magic

Tricks and Puzzles

Kiddikins and Babykins

## ERECTOR

★No. 12½ Set — The Remote Control Set

★No. 8½ Set — The All-Electric Set

★No. 9½ Set — The Parachute Jump Set

★No. 7½ Set — The Engineer's Set

★Sensational No. 6½ Set

## GILBERT TOYS for SMALL FRY

No. F7 Domino Blocks

No. 2F Village Blocks

No. 4F Skyscraper Blocks

No. 12F Giant Building Blocks



# AMERICAN FLYER TRAINS



American Flyer Trains have a great many exclusive features, which are emphasized in American Flyer national advertising. While some of these points require further explanation — which your sales people will provide when they talk to customers — you can give your train display maximum effectiveness by spotlighting these features as strongly as possible, as, for example, by preparing small handlettered cards calling attention to them. Here is a handy reference list of the more important features.

In addition, prepare price tags for each train set and piece of equipment — with prices large enough to be read easily.



★ Real smoke synchronized with train speed.

★ "Choo-choo" sound effects synchronized with train speed.

★ Realistic 2-rail track — no old-fashioned third rail.

★ Trains and tracks built to uniform  $\frac{3}{16}$ " scale — in correct proportion to each other.

★ Two-loop track system can be laid out in floor space only 6 feet square.

★ Superpower worm drive for smooth, steady pull at all speeds.

★ Automatic couplers on all cars — uncouple by remote control.

★ Talking railroad station.

★ Billboard whistle — operates anywhere — any time.





## No. 250 SPECTACULAR AMERICAN FLYER ANIMATED TRAIN DISPLAY

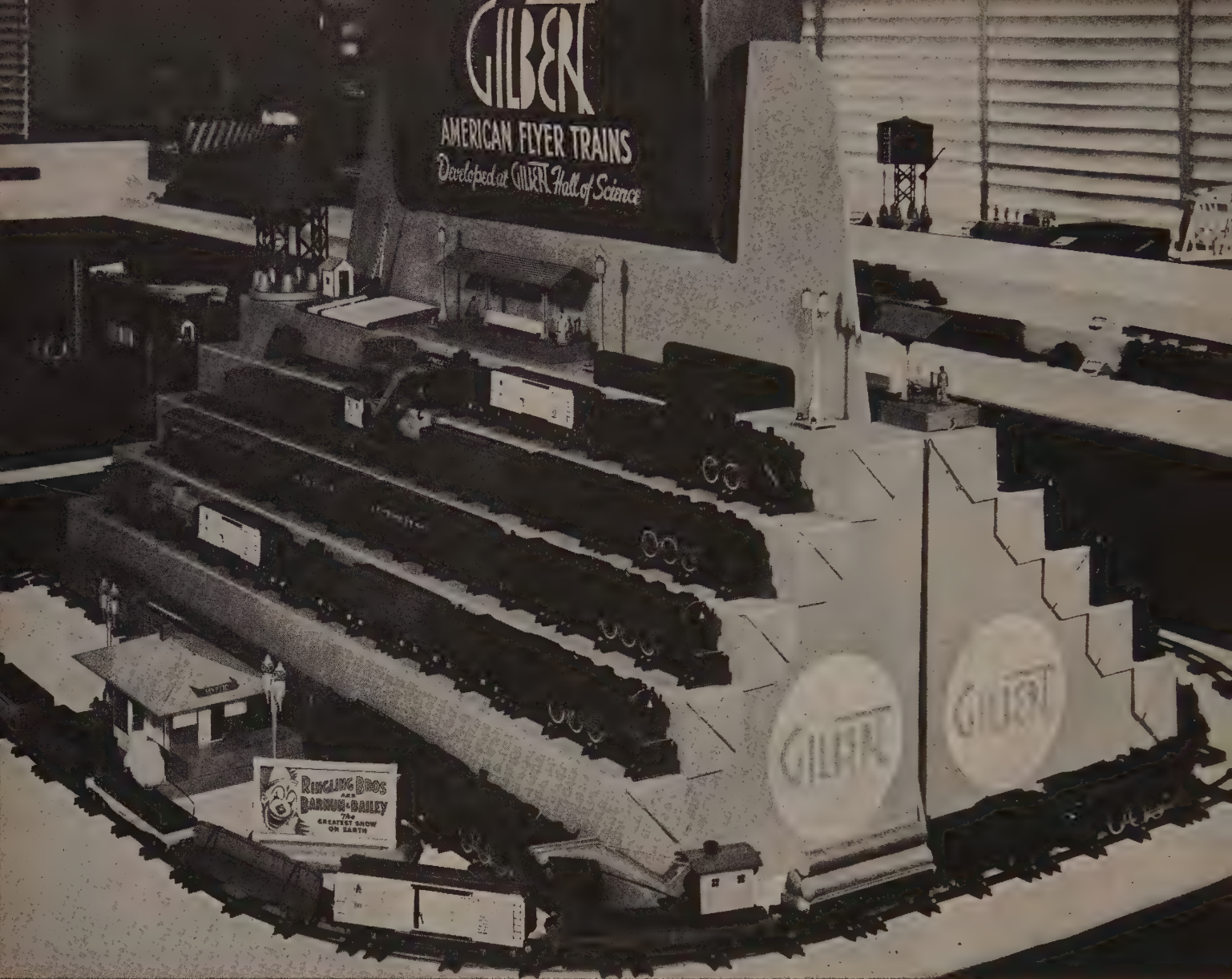
Designed as the central unit for an American Flyer display, it vividly portrays the glory of railroading and gives special emphasis to the more important American Flyer features.

It is 12' wide, so that it exactly fits both the counters and display backgrounds used in building a Gilbert Hall of Science. See pages 12 to 16. Central illustration is an adaptation of the famous boys-at-the-crossing gate photograph featured on the cover page of the American Flyer

Train catalog and in American Flyer national advertising.

Unit is sturdily constructed of plywood and Presdwood and finished in a dramatic combination of colors. Electric wiring built in for illuminating locomotive headlight, semaphore and side panels in tower. Lights in semaphore and side panels flash on and off. Unit is equipped with electric motor for automatically raising and lowering crossing gate.





## AMERICAN FLYER STEP DISPLAY No. 100

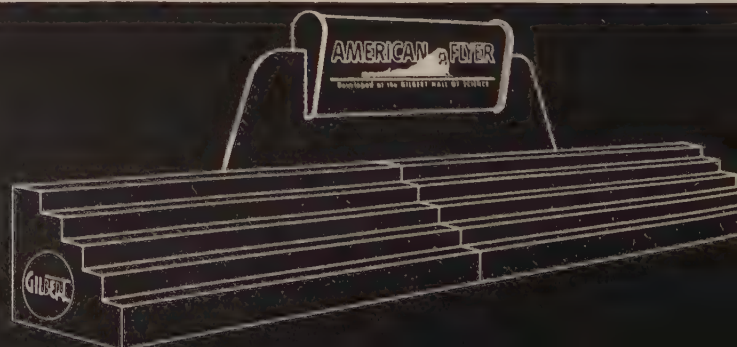
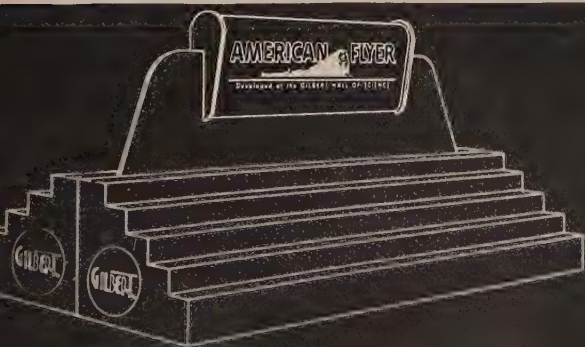
This display has been thoroughly sales-tested and offers a practical and effective way to show the entire American Flyer train line.

Display consists of two sets of steps, each of which is 60" long x 18" deep and with three steps 3" wide and 3" high.

Placed back to back, the two sets of steps measure 60" x 36" at the base and make an ideal island display. Track layout may be built

around base of display, using space at two ends for stations, automatic loading equipment and other accessories. Placed end to end, the two sets of steps make a wall display 120" long x 18" wide.

Display background is in two tones of blue with red lettering on white panel; can readily be fitted to either method of using display.





# AMERICAN FLYER QUICK-SELLING TABLE DISPLAY

## EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

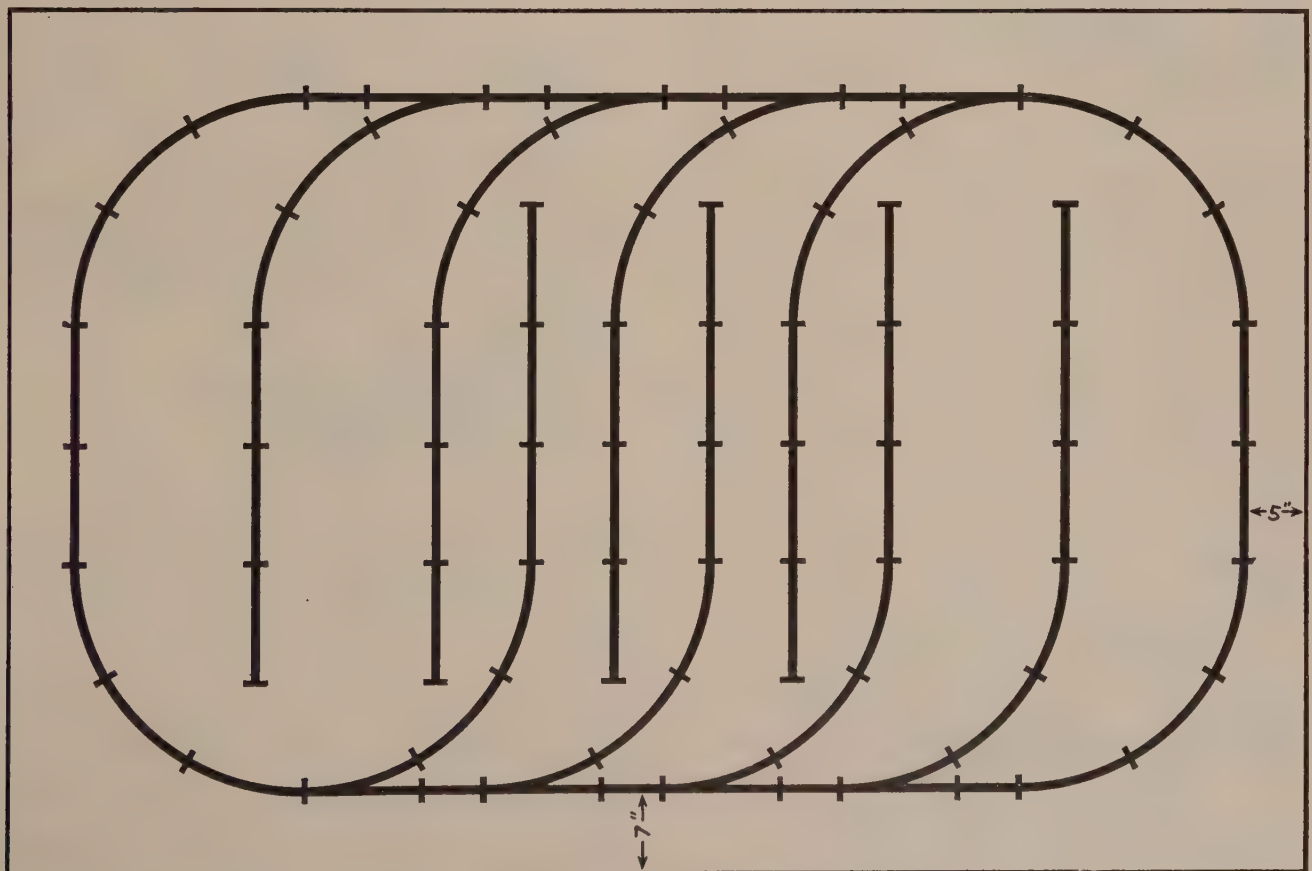
- One 9' x 6' table
- 28 No. 700 sections of straight track
- 28 No. 702 sections of curved track
- 8 No. 701 half straight sections
- 8 No. 720 left hand automatic switches
- 8 trains — each a different popular number in the American Flyer line.

With eight trains placed on the eight sidings, this layout makes a most interesting and impressive display. Automatic equipment set up

between the sidings can be demonstrated by remote control.

The two-train operation feature of the No. 720 Remote Control Switch makes it possible to demonstrate any train a customer wants to see in action — while all the other trains are held on their sidings.

But even more important is the fact that it helps to speed up sales. Customers can see at a glance the price of each train set and exactly which locomotive and cars come with it. It is also advantageous to arrange the trains in price sequence. Place the No. 48T at one end, No. 4801A next, etc.



9'-0" x 6'-0" TABLE

28 #700 STRAIGHT SECTIONS  
28 #702 CURVED SECTIONS  
8 #701 HALF STRAIGHT SECTIONS  
8 #720 L.H. AUTO. SWITCHES



# POINTERS ON DISPLAYING TRAINS

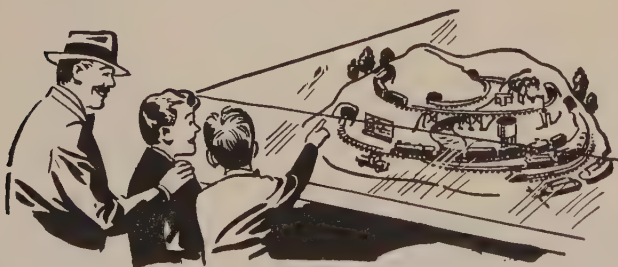


Trains in operation are always more interesting if the layout includes equipment: talking railroad station — log loader — coal loader — stations — billboard whistle — bridges — crossing gate — water tank, etc.



Real smoke is a spectacular American Flyer feature. Be sure operating locomotives are always puffing smoke. Smoke cartridges should be replaced about every three hours.

Keep only one package of each train set open at a time. This will guard against parts becoming misplaced.



If operating trains are placed in windows, locate them so that they can be easily serviced — smoke cartridges replaced, etc. Trains look

more realistic and will require less servicing if run at a slow speed.

To protect trains from crowds, it is advisable to put up a wire or glass screen one foot high all around the train counter. This is a wise precaution to take both with an operating train system and train displays.

Train set should have the couplers hooked up and the cars in identically the same order as shown in the catalog. This will help customers identify the trains they saw in the catalog or in American Flyer national advertising.

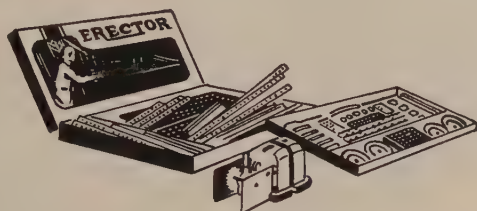


Many customers feel a strong urge to handle the controls of a train system. A good way to let the public exercise this urge without risking damage to equipment is to rig up a billboard whistle with the control button in plain sight and a small sign inviting people to push it. Transformers and all other controls should be kept out of the public's reach and disconnected when the demonstrator is not on duty.



# POINTERS ON DISPLAYING ERECTOR AND GILBERT SCIENTIFIC TOYS

All of these toys are packaged in metal, wood or cardboard boxes especially designed for display with the box *open*. In the case of Erector and Erector-Brik the inside of the top cover shows illustrations of models which that set makes. Be sure to display one box of each set opened up. Erector Sets Nos. 7½, 8½, 9½ and 12½ have hinged covers to facilitate open displays.

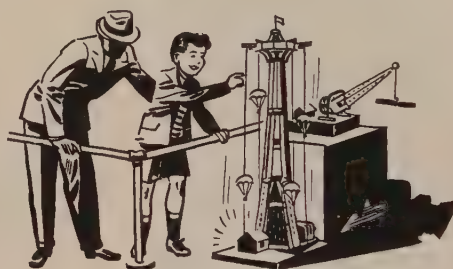


In all Erector sets except the No. 2½, the parts are packed two trays deep. Remove the top tray and place it in front of the set so that customers can see what a big array of parts they are getting for the money. Also, remove the electric motor and place it in front of the box.



Gilbert Chemistry Sets (except No. 1) and No. 10 and No. 15 Microscope Sets are packed in laboratory style boxes and should be displayed fully opened up. These two items are ideally suited for hanging on walls, either in interior displays or window displays.

Actual models made with Erector increase tremendously interest in and sales of Erector sets. If used in windows, it is recommended that they *not* be shown operating, as they may require servicing from time to time. When displayed inside the store, operating models should be placed where they are out of reach of customer's hands.



A good selling display of the less expensive Gilbert toys (those packed in cardboard boxes) can be made by piling them up on an island table. On the top of each stack, place two boxes in an upright position, fastened at the top with a pin and with the bottoms pulled apart 5 or 6 inches so that they form an inverted V.



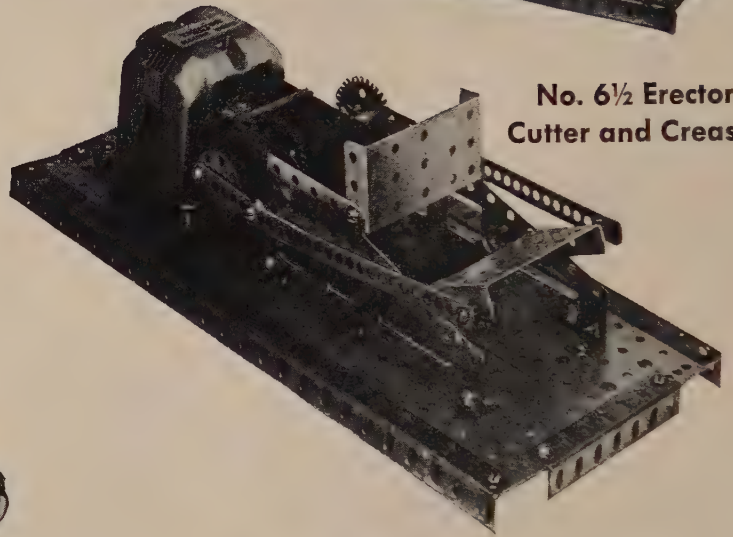


# ERECTOR MODEL DISPLAYS Completely Assembled

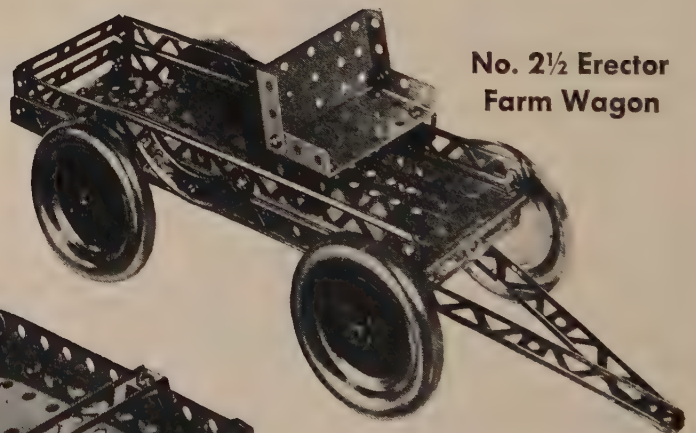
No. 4½ Erector  
Railroad Bridge



No. 6½ Erector  
Cutter and Creaser



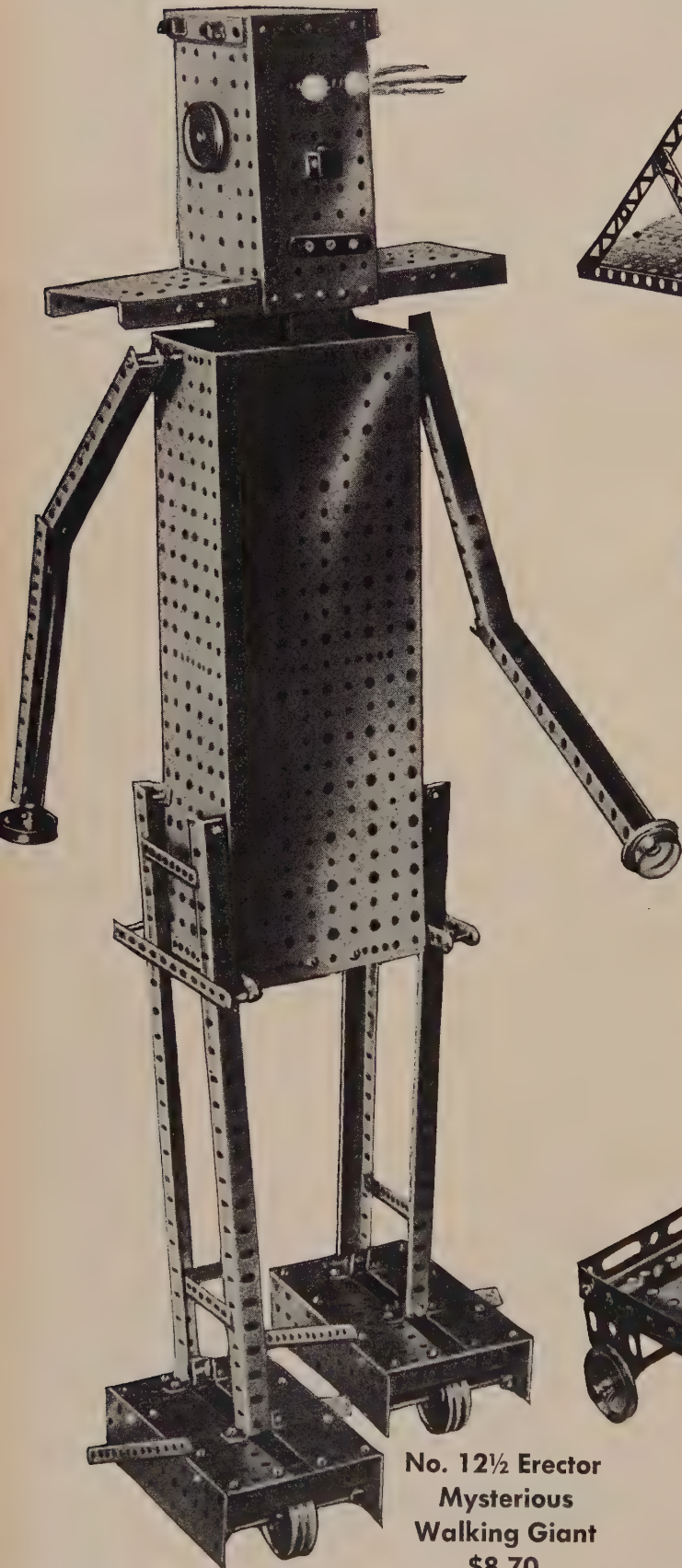
No. 2½ Erector  
Farm Wagon



Express Wagon  
Farm Wagon  
Cutter and Creaser  
Railroad Bridge  
B ASSORTMENT

Price for four  
Models . . . \$6.30

No. 12½ Erector  
Mysterious  
Walking Giant  
\$8.70



No. 1½ Erector  
Express Wagon





— Ready To Put On Your Shelves And Counters . . .

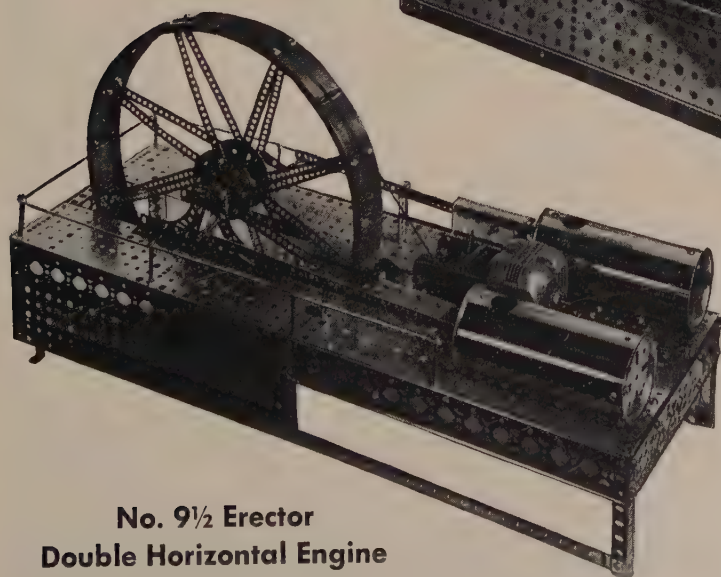
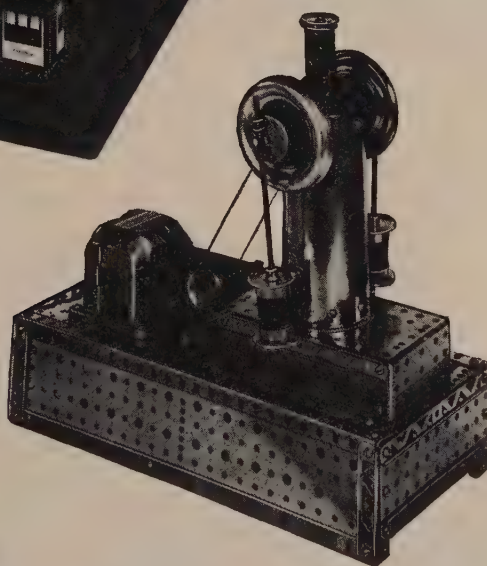


**No. 8½ Erector  
Giant Ferris Wheel  
\$10.25**

**BLINKING  
TOWER  
\$8.20**



**No. 7½ Erector  
Twin Cylinder Engine  
\$5.24**



**No. 9½ Erector  
Double Horizontal Engine  
\$6.98**



# WHY IT PAYS TO BUILD A GILBERT HALL OF SCIENCE IN YOUR STORE

No other name in the toy world is so famous or carries so much sales magic as "Gilbert Hall of Science." Your customers read about it in Gilbert national advertising. They see the words "Developed at the Gilbert Hall of Science" on packages containing Erector, American Flyer Trains and other Gilbert scientific toys.

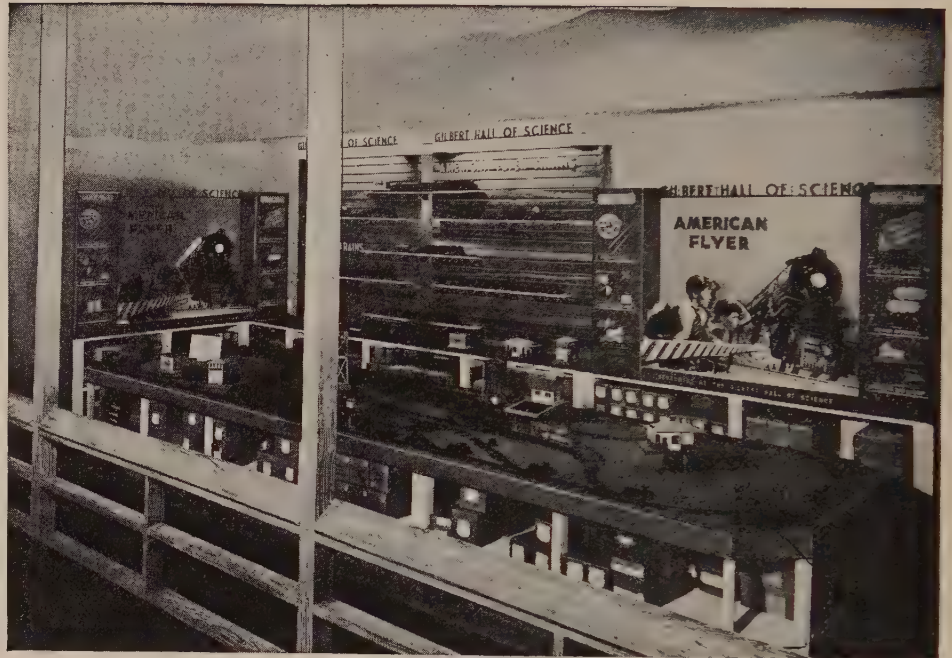
In addition, thousands of boys, girls and parents, from every State in the Union, annually visit the Gilbert Hall of Science in New York and bring back thrilling stories of what they saw.

Today The A. C. Gilbert Company offers you a new plan for cashing in on this famous institution: *Build a Gilbert Hall of Science right in your store.*

The installation of a Gilbert Hall of Science will be important news in your city—and it will continue to be news month after month, year after year. It gives you something definite and specific to point to in building up your reputation for leadership and identifying your store as "Toy Headquarters."

By featuring in your store advertising such phrases as "Visit our Gilbert Hall of Science" . . . "The Store with the Gilbert Hall of Science," you give your store special prestige in the eyes of customers, increase store traffic and enjoy the benefits of an incalculable amount of word-of-mouth publicity.

In brief, building a Gilbert Hall of Science offers you a simple and inexpensive way to put a new and tremendously powerful merchandising force back of your entire toy department.

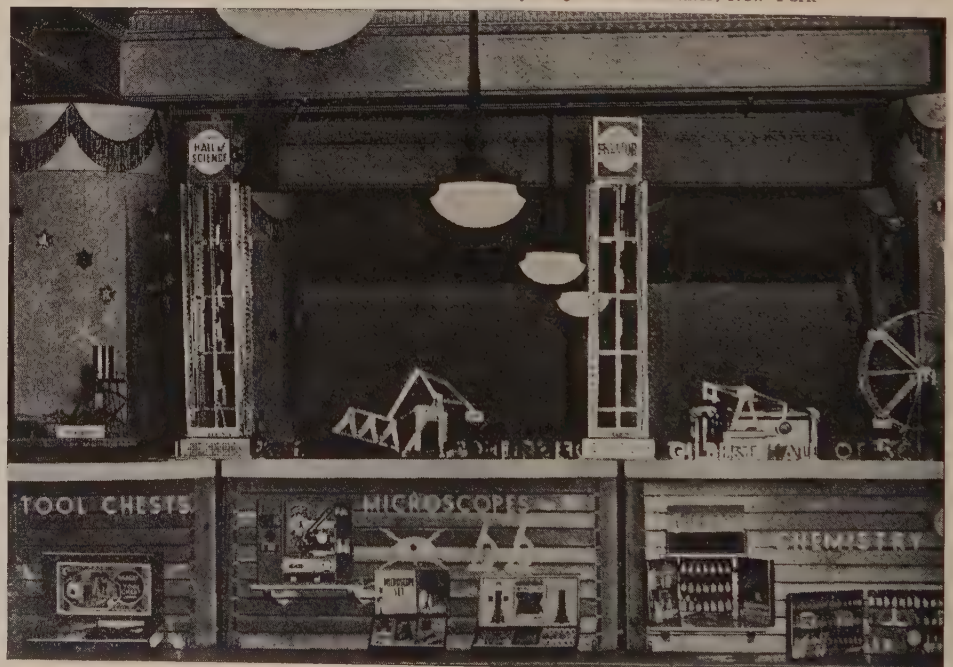


Photograph — Courtesy of G. Fox & Co., Inc., Hartford, Conn.

## **Sales-Tested in Leading Stores**

To make sure there were no "bugs" either in the idea or the actual construction units, three leading department stores were invited to sales test the new Gilbert Hall of Science last year. In all three stores it proved highly successful both as a promotion stunt and as a practical means of displaying, demonstrating and selling toys.

Photograph — Courtesy of John Wanamaker, New York



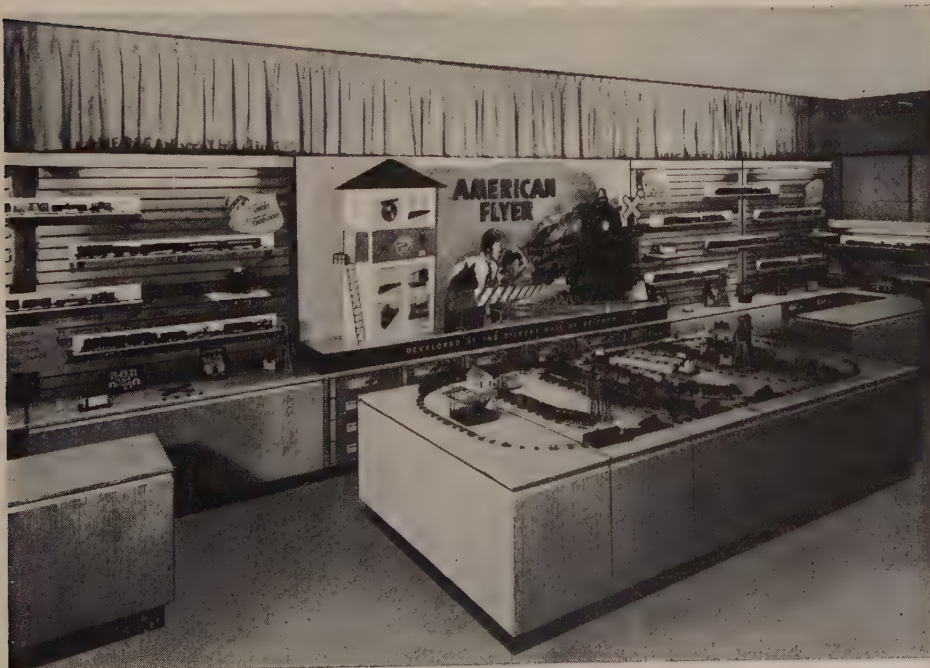


# PRACTICAL SELLING ADVANTAGES OF A GILBERT HALL OF SCIENCE



Erector, Gilbert Chemistry sets and other Gilbert Scientific Toys are displayed together in the model Gilbert Hall of Science in New York. Floor space required for a unit such as this is approximately 24' x 20'.

The American Flyer Train section in the model Gilbert Hall of Science as set up in our New York show room. Floor space required is approximately 40 x 15 feet.



A Gilbert Hall of Science not only increases store traffic and brings you valuable prestige, but it also gives you these four practical selling advantages:

## ONE

**Effective and safe display of feature sets and models.**

Special shelves, which are easily attached to backgrounds, permit displaying Erector models, train sets, train equipment, etc. to best advantage — and at eye level. At the same time, displays are out of the way of sales people and out of the reach of customers, guarding against damage by careless handling.

## TWO

**Ample space for demonstrations.**

Many Gilbert Hall of Science toys as, for example, the new Erector Walking Giant, trains, log loader and many others require demonstration in order to make customers fully appreciate their play value. The special counters can readily be combined in units of two, three or more to give ample room for impressive demonstrations.

## THREE

**Clear counters for selling.**

By displaying merchandise largely on background shelves and demonstration tables, it is very easy to plan your Gilbert Hall of Science in such a way as to leave sufficient clear counter space for actual selling. This facilitates waiting on customers and gives sales people a better opportunity to sell the larger — and more profitable — Erector sets, train sets, etc.

## FOUR

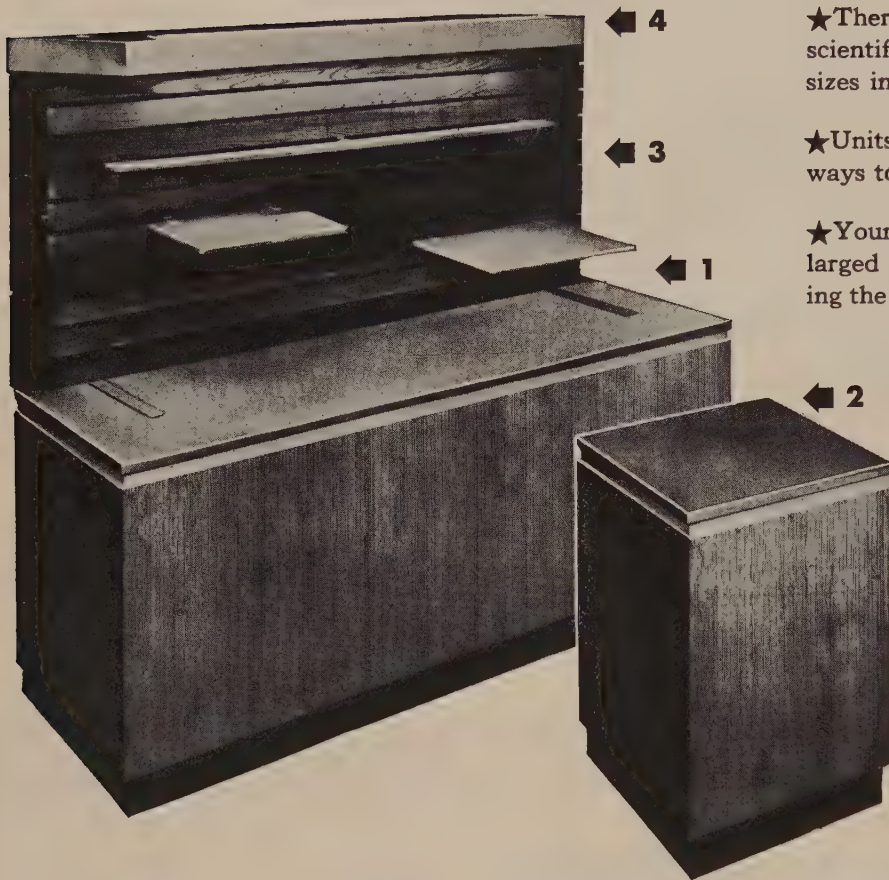
**Convenient under-counter storage space.**

Gilbert Hall of Science counters are constructed with one side open, permitting the use of the entire interior for storage of merchandise. Thus, sales people have packaged sets literally at their finger tips. Where counters are placed together side by side, the interior space can be used for storage of reserve stocks.



# BASIC UNITS FOR CONSTRUCTING A GILBERT HALL OF SCIENCE

*Easily assembled in only a few hours*



★There are only four basic construction units—scientifically designed to fit together—and three sizes in shelves.

★Units can be assembled in an infinite variety of ways to fit floor space of any size or shape.

★Your Gilbert Hall of Science can quickly be enlarged during the holiday season—contracted during the rest of the year.

★All basic units can be obtained from The A. C. Gilbert Company or—if you prefer—you can use counters of your own construction.

A complete counter and background unit measures 6' x 2' at the base and stands 64" high with one background and canopy. With two backgrounds and canopy, the total height is 94".

Shelves are made in three sizes: 54" x 3" for trains, 14" x 20" and 11" x 16" for Erector models, train equipment, etc.

## THERE ARE ONLY FOUR BASIC UNITS

*Design patent applied for*

1. Large Weldtex counter—a product of the U.S. Plywood Company. Size: 2' x 6' x 30" high. Natural wood finish—with chrome-yellow linoleum top. Sides in smart, textured Weldtex. One side open, permitting use of entire interior for storage of merchandise. Base is set back, to prevent scuffing of sides.

2. Small Weldtex counter. Size 2' x 2' x 30" high. All other specifications same as for large counter.

3. Slatted display background. Size: 6' long x 30" high.

Made of wood and supplied in natural finish, waxed on both sides. Slatted construction permits attaching shelves and display plaques by simply slipping metal support lugs through slits. Slats are 3" wide—9 slats per background. Backgrounds may be attached to counters one unit in height or two units in height.

4. Illuminated canopy. Size: 6' long x 8" wide x 3" high. Comes complete with built-in fluorescent lamp, approved by Underwriters' Laboratories. Easily attached to top of display background.

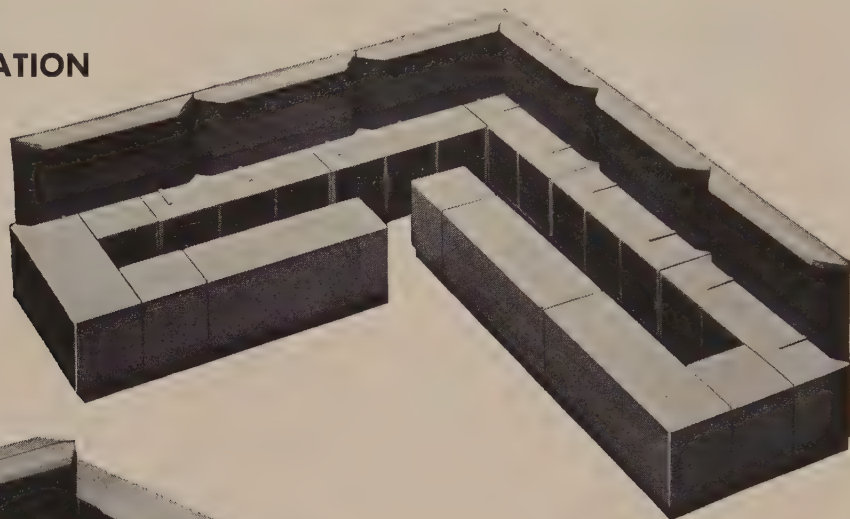


# FITTING A GILBERT HALL OF SCIENCE TO YOUR FLOOR SPACE

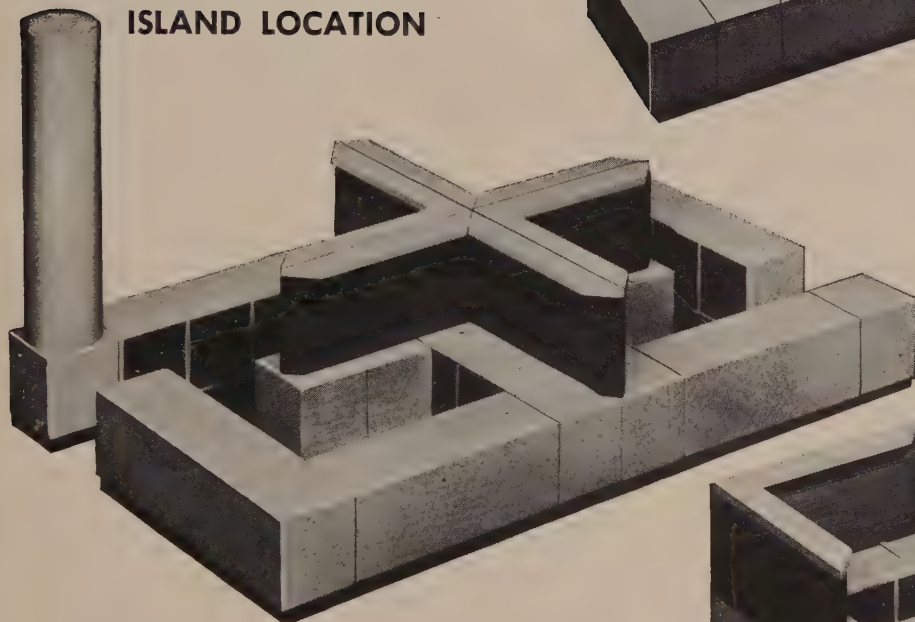
*Regardless of the size or shape of your floor space, a Gilbert Hall of Science can easily be fitted to it.*

*Here are a few suggestions. Many variations are possible in the same floor space or in areas of different sizes and proportions.*

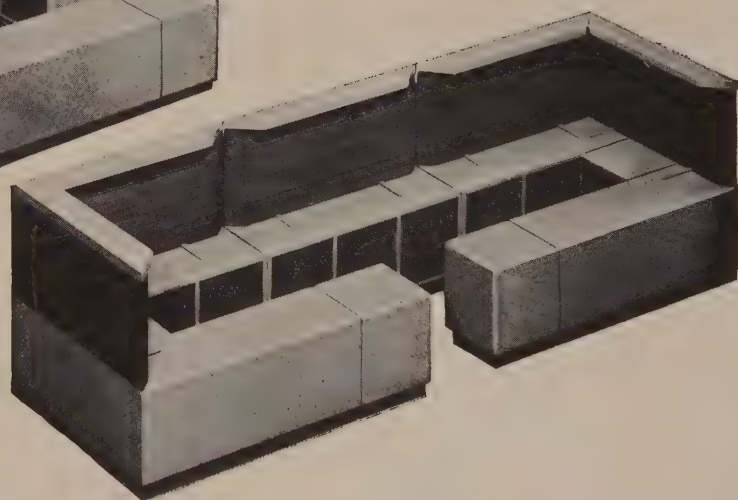
**CORNER LOCATION**



**ISLAND LOCATION**



**STRAIGHT WALL LOCATION**



★See back cover of this book for Display Plaques and Letter Strips for your Gilbert Hall of Science.

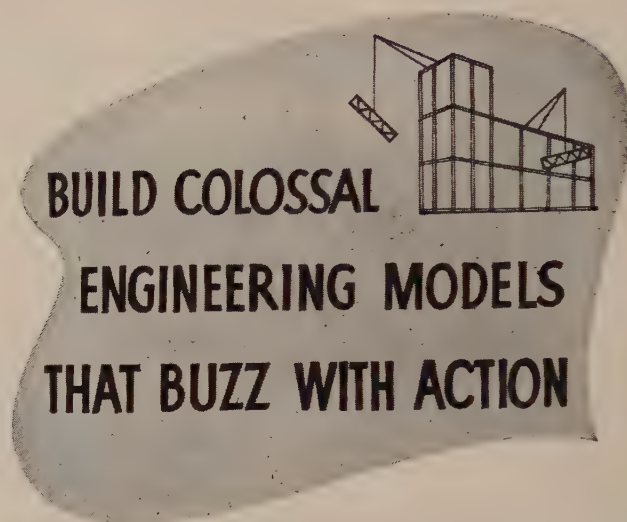
Send for special book "Building a Permanent Gilbert Hall of Science," complete with ruled floor plan form and cardboard cutouts to assist you in laying out a Gilbert Hall of Science. Address: Gilbert Hall of Science Store Display.

**THE A. C. GILBERT COMPANY**  
New Haven 6, Conn., U.S.A.



# DISPLAY PLAQUES AND LETTER STRIPS

*Especially designed to be attached instantly to Gilbert Hall of Science slatted display backgrounds.*



## DISPLAY PLAQUES

Display cutouts both dress up backgrounds and spotlight products or special features of products. They are made of Presdwood and are ap-

proximately 18" x 12" in size. Beautifully finished in colors to harmonize with counters and backgrounds.

*Subjects covered by display plaques are as follows:*

No. 350—Microscopes

No. 360—Mysto Magic

No. 364—Trains

No. 351—Chemistry

No. 362—Erector

—“Smoke and Choo-Choo”

No. 353—Tool Chests

No. 361—Trains—“Just like real”

No. 365—Trains—“2-Rail Track”

No. 363—Trains—“Worm Drive”

No. 366—Trains—“3/16” Scale”

# AMERICAN FLYER TRAINS

## STANDARD LETTER STRIPS

These are constructed so that they can be attached in two ways. On the top of No. 303 Lighting Canopy or to No. 302 Background.

All letter strips are cut out of Presdwood and finished in brilliant color. Letters are 3" high in all strips but width varies according to length.

*Complete list of letter strips and exact wording is as follows:*

No. 325—Gilbert Hall of Science

No. 328—Microscopes

No. 331—Puzzles

No. 326—American Flyer Trains

No. 329—Erector

No. 332—Mysto Magic

No. 327—HO Scale Trains

No. 330—Chemistry

No. 334—Tool Chests





Figure 4. (a) 100% (b) 75% (c) 50% (d) 25% (e) 0% around:

123





|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 0 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 0 |



NONC03040

-50- Shares

# THE A. C. GILBERT COMPANY

INCORPORATED UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND

COMMON STOCK

-J W SPARKS & CO-

-FIFTY-

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Is the owner of fully paid and non-assessable shares without par value of the COMMON STOCK of

THE A. C. GILBERT COMPANY

(hereinafter called the Corporation), transferable on the books of the Corporation in person or by duly authorized attorney, upon surrender of this certificate properly endorsed.

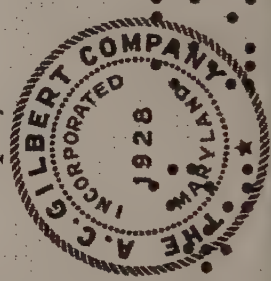
By the acceptance of this certificate and the shares represented hereby, the holder hereof assents to and agrees to be bound by all the provisions of the charter of the Corporation as amended, a copy of which is on file with the Transfer Agent.

This certificate is not valid until countersigned by the Transfer Agent and registered by the Registrar.

WITNESS the seal of the Company and the facsimile signatures of its duly authorized officers.

Dated: DEC 6 1954

*A. C. Gilbert*  
Secretary



*H. H. Trinch*  
Executive Vice President

Countersigned:  
THE CHASE NATIONAL BANK OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK,  
Transfer Agent,  
By \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Officer.



SECURITY IN ASSURE COMPANY





NONC4197

- 100 - Shares

# THE A. C. GILBERT COMPANY

INCORPORATED UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND

COMMON STOCK

- EASTMAN DILLON & CO -

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

ONE HUNDRED

is the owner of fully paid and non-assessable shares without par value of the COMMON STOCK of THE A. C. GILBERT COMPANY (hereinafter called the Corporation), transferable on the books of the Corporation in person or by duly authorized attorney, upon surrender of this certificate properly endorsed.

By the acceptance of this certificate and the shares represented hereby, the holder hereof assents to and agrees to be bound by all the provisions of the charter of the Corporation as amended, a copy of which is on file with the Transfer Agent.

This certificate is not valid until countersigned by the Transfer Agent and registered by the Registrar.

WITNESS the seal of the Company and the facsimile signatures of its duly authorized officers.

Dated:



*A. C. Gilbert*  
Secretary

*H. L. Trisch*  
Executive Vice President

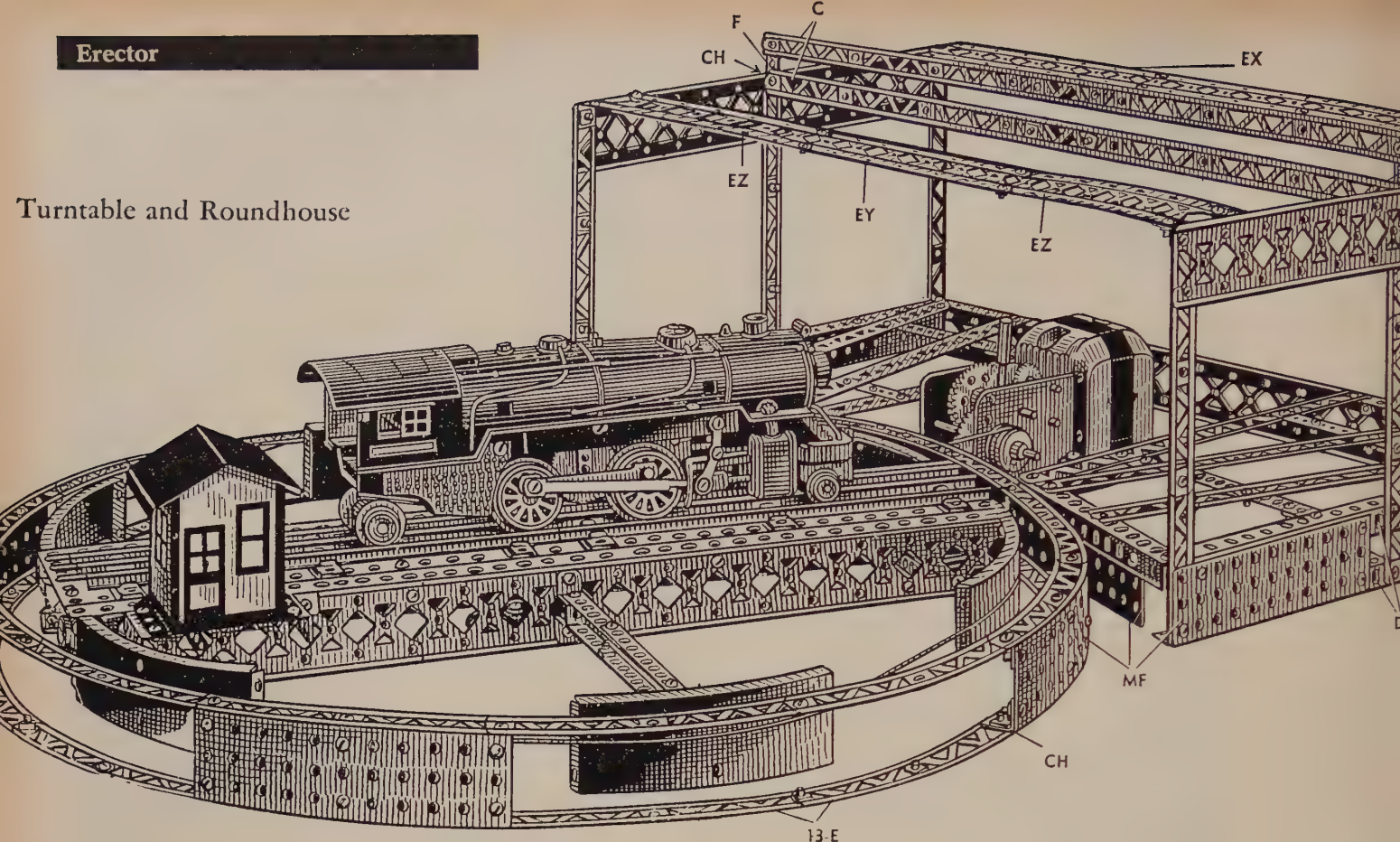
Authorized Officer.

Countersigned:  
THE CHASE NATIONAL BANK OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK,  
Transfer Agent.  
By

Registered:  
MANUFACTURERS TRUST COMPANY,  
Registrar.



## Turntable and Roundhouse



# Those fascinating Erector sets

## *The history—and the man—behind them*

By Major Daniel A. Yett  
 Photos by the author  
 Illustrations from collection of Peter Juggle

If ever there was a person who fit the description "All-American Boy," it was Alfred Carlton Gilbert. He was born on February 15, 1884, in Salem, Oregon. As a young boy growing up in the great Pacific Northwest, A.C. hardly ever stopped moving. From building a complete gymnasium in the barn to organizing the neighborhood kids into a make-believe fire company, from trapping squirrels for bounty to teaching his pets tricks, he was as active as any boy could have been.

During his boyhood and teen years, A.C. had two great hobbies: one was magic, the other was athletics. Both were to play very important roles in later years. While still in his early teens, he went away to boarding school to begin his formal education. While there, he began to develop the

athletic skills which came to him naturally as a boy. He was a successful athlete from the beginning. His reputation began to grow and other athletes were soon seeking his advice so that he did a little coaching in addition to his own participation. Eventually, he began to consider coaching as a career. This idea was fostered by his coaches and friends as well as his father.

Finally, when his father offered to cover the expense, A.C. decided to attend the School of Physical Education at Chautauqua, New York. This school was conducted during summer vacation, and upon the completion of two summer sessions, students were awarded a diploma as a Director of Physical Education. During his second summer at Chautauqua, he became friends with Dr. J. W. Seaver, director

of the Yale Gymnasium, and Dr. W.G. Anderson, a member of the Yale faculty. These men advised A.C. that the best way to prepare for a career as a director of physical education and coach was to obtain a medical degree, and, of course, they recommended Yale as the school to get it.

### INTEREST IN MAGIC

During his teen years, A.C.'s interest in magic never diminished. He continued to practice and improve, so that by the time he entered Yale in the fall of 1904, he was an accomplished amateur magician. Magic was a very popular form of entertainment around the turn of the century. This was the heyday of Houdini, Blackwell and many other great magicians. Many people took up magic as a hobby, and A.C. soon began to make many friends and contacts among the Yale faculty



and in the local community. He was a good enough magician to join the Society of American Magicians and had a lot of fun entertaining friends and fellow students with his bag of tricks. Most of the people he entertained were not really serious about magic, however. They weren't interested in spending the many hours of practice it took to perfect slight of hand or other tricks. They only wanted to learn some little gimmick or novelty to impress their friends at parties. After a while, A.C. got the idea to cater to their wish by selling them a simple magic trick and a lesson on how to perform it.

It was about this time that A.C. met John Petrie. Petrie was a mechanic in a New Haven factory and, like A.C., an amateur magician. Petrie thought he might be able to make the magic tricks and novelties that A.C. wanted to sell to his friends. Together, they worked out a few ideas and began selling their little magic trick boxes. They started this sometime during 1907, and it wasn't long before some of their customers began to buy additional boxes as gifts for their relatives and friends. A.C. Gilbert and John Petrie were in business, even though they didn't realize it at the time.

The year 1908 was to be an eventful one for A.C. During his four years at Yale, his athletic career continued apace. His medical studies would not allow him time for the wide variety of sports he had participated in back in Oregon, but he did continue with his best sport, pole vaulting. He had already broken the world record for the pole vault and his career was to culminate in a gold medal for the pole vault in the 1908 Olympics in London, England.

Upon his return to New Haven in the fall of 1908, the stage was almost set for the invention of Erector. Only one element remained and that was the Mysto Manufacturing Co. A.C. still had a few academic requirements to fulfill to complete his medical degree. He didn't have to carry a full academic load and he was no longer eligible for athletics so he had a good deal more time to devote to his magic boxes. He and John Petrie picked up where they had left off. They expanded their line and even put out a mail order catalog. They knew they were in business now, and A.C.'s course for the rest of his life was set. In the spring of 1909, upon his graduation from medical school, A.C. broke the news to his father that he did not in-

A 1915 full page ad (magazine unknown). Note the illustration in the upper right showing the train on the bridge.

**Destructive**

**Constructive**

## Every Boy Has Two Sides

**Big, Strong Models**  
Boys can build over 500 strong, life-like models. The Erector beams are the perfect material for building models that are strong and durable. The models are built with the same material that is used in the construction of bridges, buildings, and other structures. They are made of steel, and are as strong as steel. They are also as easy to use as steel. They are made of steel, and are as strong as steel. They are also as easy to use as steel.

**Develop His Constructive Side**  
The Erector beams are the perfect material for building models that are strong and durable. They are made of steel, and are as strong as steel. They are also as easy to use as steel. They are made of steel, and are as strong as steel. They are also as easy to use as steel.

**Solving The Boy Problem**  
The Erector beams are the perfect material for building models that are strong and durable. They are made of steel, and are as strong as steel. They are also as easy to use as steel. They are made of steel, and are as strong as steel. They are also as easy to use as steel.

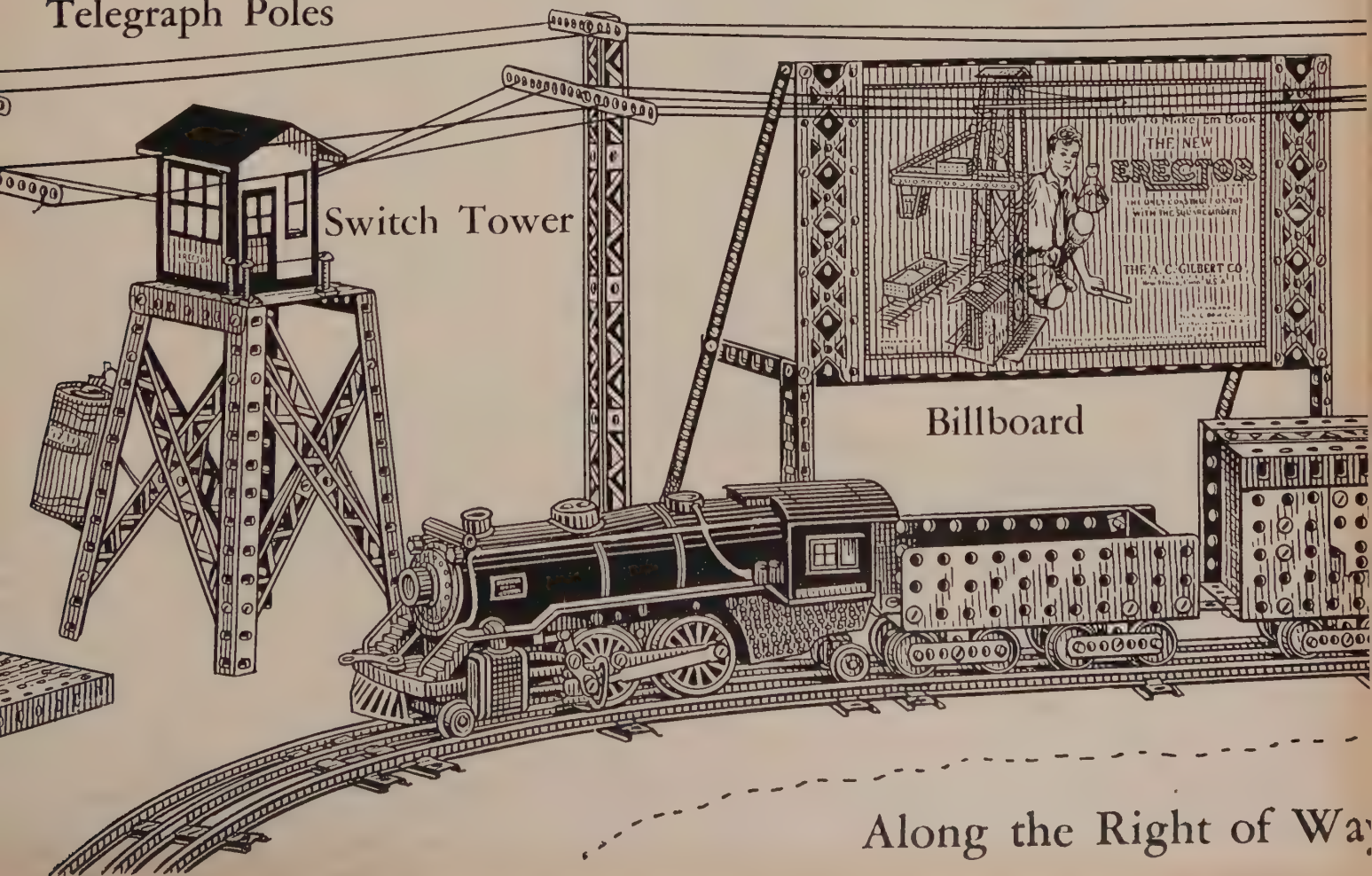
**Send for Free Book and Boys' Magazine**  
To make your boy's interest with Erector, and to get the best of the best, send for the free book and boys' magazine. They are made of steel, and are as strong as steel. They are also as easy to use as steel.

# ERECTOR

The Toy Like Structural Steel

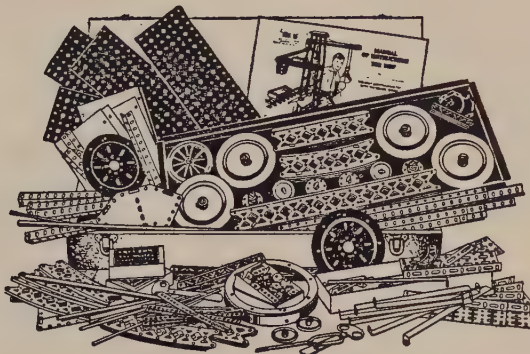
**ERECTOR TIPS**  
By Dr. C. Gilbert  
This Auto FREE

## Telegraph Poles



Along the Right of Way



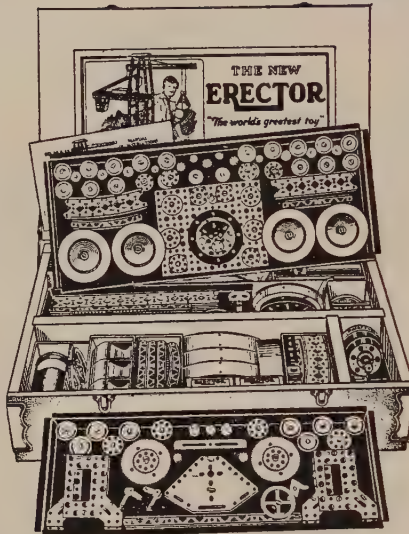


**No. B ERECTOR** . . . *Builds the Ferris Wheel* . . . Contains big straight and curved channeled girders . . . An accessory set to be used in conjunction with any Erector set or as a complete set itself . . . Features models not built in any other Erector set except No. 10. Builds 58 large attractive models. Packed in a wooden box, beautifully colored in red with black high-light . . . Size  $21\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$  inches . . . Packed one to a carton . . . Carton weight 19 lbs. . . **RETAIL, \$9.50.**

**No. A ERECTOR** . . . *With Giant Girders* . . . *Not illustrated* . . . Contains giant girders and other feature parts not contained in the regular Erector sets . . . Will act as an accessory to any Erector Set, or as a complete set in itself . . . 42 models shown in 16 page colored Manual. Size  $18 \times 10 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  inches . . . Packed 6 to a carton . . . Carton weight 60 lbs. . . **RETAIL, \$7.50.**



**No. 3005 ERECTOR ELECTRICAL SET** . . . *Electrifies and Illuminates* . . . An accessory set, featuring electrification of Erector Models . . . A complete set in itself, with many interesting experiments, described in 26 page Manual . . . Size  $18 \times 10 \times 2\frac{1}{4}$  inches . . . Packed 6 to a carton . . . Carton weight 26 lbs. . . **RETAIL, \$5.00.**

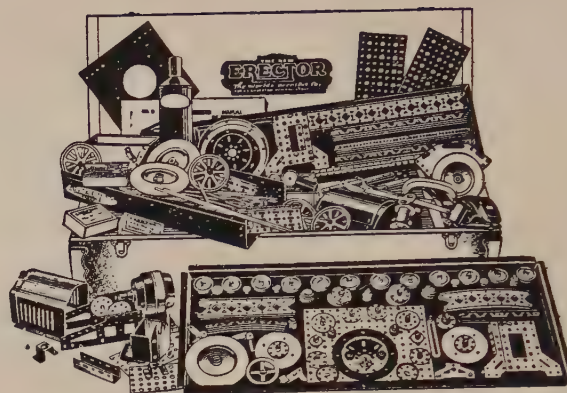
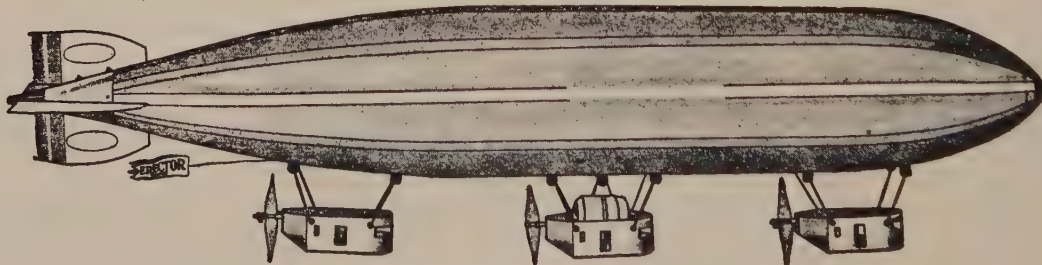


**No. 10 ERECTOR** . . . *De Luxe Set* . . . *Giant Fly Wheel and Beam Girders* . . . Complete Master Engineer's Set, containing assortment of all Erector parts. Builds over 1000 models. Individually packed in beautiful red and black high light wooden cabinet, reinforced brass corners and double brass handle grips . . . Size  $19\frac{1}{4} \times 6 \times 25\frac{1}{2}$  inches . . . Weight 71 lbs. . . **RETAIL, \$50.00.**

#### THE ZEPPELIN MODEL

ILLUSTRATED below, without 110 volt motor or electrical equipment for flying, can be built from the Trail Blazing No. 8 Erector, "The Set that builds the Zeppelin". Featured in National Advertising—big demand—order early.

**No. F ERECTOR.** Completely assembled Zeppelin. Miniature model of dirigible type aircraft. Flies captive and continuously. Steel ribbed frame, cloth covered, and powered by high speed electric motor. Model over 4 ft. long. Operates on regular house current, either alternating or direct. Individually packed in case,  $14 \times 10 \times 55$  inches. Shipping weight 30 lbs. **RETAIL, \$25.00.**



#### No. 9 ERECTOR

*"Mechanical Wonders Set with 110 Volt Motor"*  
ASSEMBLED gear box, gears, cams, pulleys, girders, boiler, etc., for making mechanical movement models; also builds the Zeppelin . . . Patented display and model building tray, digger scoop, etc. . . Packed in red and black light chest with brass corners, size  $10\frac{1}{4} \times 6 \times 29$  inches . . . Carton weight 41 lbs. **RETAIL, \$35.00.**



**No. D ERECTOR** . . . Completely assembled all metal model plane . . . 20 inch wing spread . . . Powered by famous Universal Polar Cub 110 volt motor . . . Operates from regular house current, either alternating or direct . . . Flies captive and continuously . . . Individually packed . . . Size  $23 \times 22 \times 8\frac{3}{4}$  . . . Shipping weight 14 lbs . . . **RETAIL, \$12.50.**

**No. C ERECTOR** . . . *Not illustrated* . . . Complete Airplane construction set . . . Builds mono-planes, seaplanes, biplanes, etc. . . 19 different models that fly captive for hours at a time . . . Models average 24 inches over all, with 20 inch wing spread . . . Powered by famous Universal Polar Cub 110 volt motor . . . Operates on regular house current, either alternating or direct . . . Size  $13\frac{1}{4} \times 20\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$  . . . Packed 6 to a carton . . . Carton weight 44 lbs. **RETAIL, \$10.00.**



tend to practice medicine as his father had hoped. He had decided to pursue the venture he and John Petrie had already started. They adopted the name of Mysto Manufacturing Co. and were on their way, especially since A.C.'s father had given them a \$5,000 loan to invest in the business.

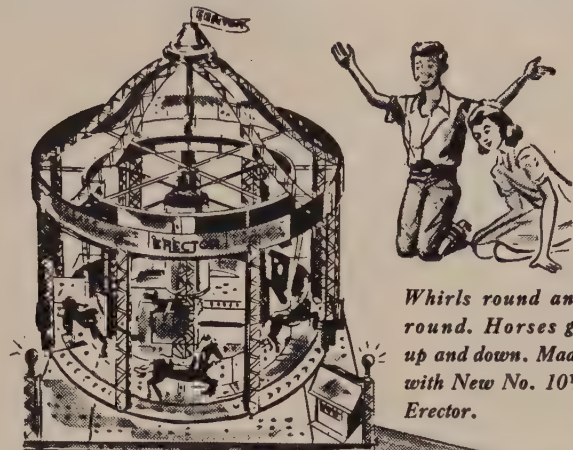
### MAKE LOTS OF TOYS!

The business was a success right from the start. Within two years it grossed over \$47,000 (1911) and a year later, almost \$60,000. They had opened a retail store in New York and were beginning to develop a good reputation among professional magicians for the professional magic apparatus they had added to their line. In 1911 they incorporated, with A.C. Gilbert as president, John Petrie as treasurer, and Clyde W. Powers (the New York store manager) as secretary. Total assets were \$13,500.

By now A.C. was spending a lot of his time as a traveling salesman for the company. He traveled all over the country selling his wares. When he was not traveling, he concentrated his efforts in the metropolitan New York area. He soon found that he was dealing with the toy buyers at the stores he called on since his magic boxes and novelties didn't fit into any other category. He also began to meet toy salesmen as well as toy buyers and learned that there weren't very many good toys being made and that what few there were came from Germany.

In 1911, A.C. found himself making frequent business trips between New Haven and New York City. On these trips he rode the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad. The section of track he traveled was being electrified at this time. As the weeks and months passed, he watched with increasing interest the progress of the work as the steel girders to support the electrical lines were "erected." He was fascinated with the shapes of the girders and how they were put together, piece by piece. Readers who own or have access to a copy of *America's Colorful Railroads* by Don Ball, Jr. may want to refer to page 28. The picture shows the very line A.C. traveled. Clearly shown is the steel girder work which served as the inspiration for Erector. Also take note of the train in the picture. This is the General Electric Ignitron Rectifier locomotive pulling a consist of orange

## BOYS! Build and Run This Dazzling Merry-Go-Round



*Whirls round and round. Horses go up and down. Made with New No. 10 1/2 Erector.*

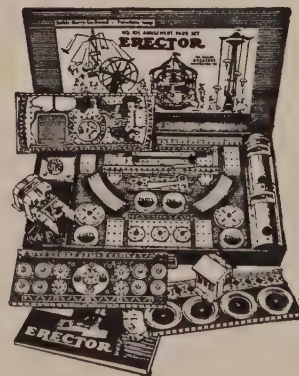
No. 10 1/2 Erector—  
Amusement Park Set

**\$29.50**

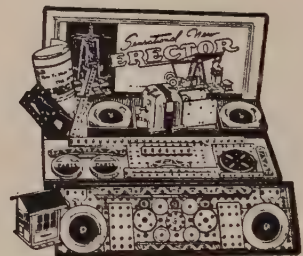
Other Erector sets  
from \$1.75

Here's the latest Erector sensation—a set that builds a realistic, operating Merry-Go-Round—complete with six horses and electric lights. Set also builds real action parachute jump, giant Ferris wheel, magnetic crane and numerous other models that buzz with action. Contains Gilbert electric engine with gear shift for forward, reverse and stop—amazing new Flex-O-Matic Drive—big assortment of girders and other parts.

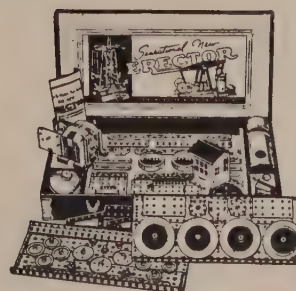
## STORE NAME



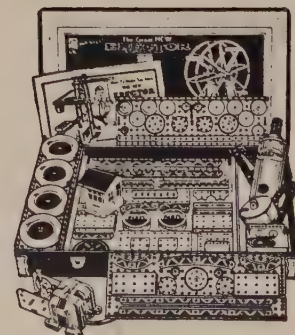
No. 10 1/2 Erector



No. 6 1/2 A Erector

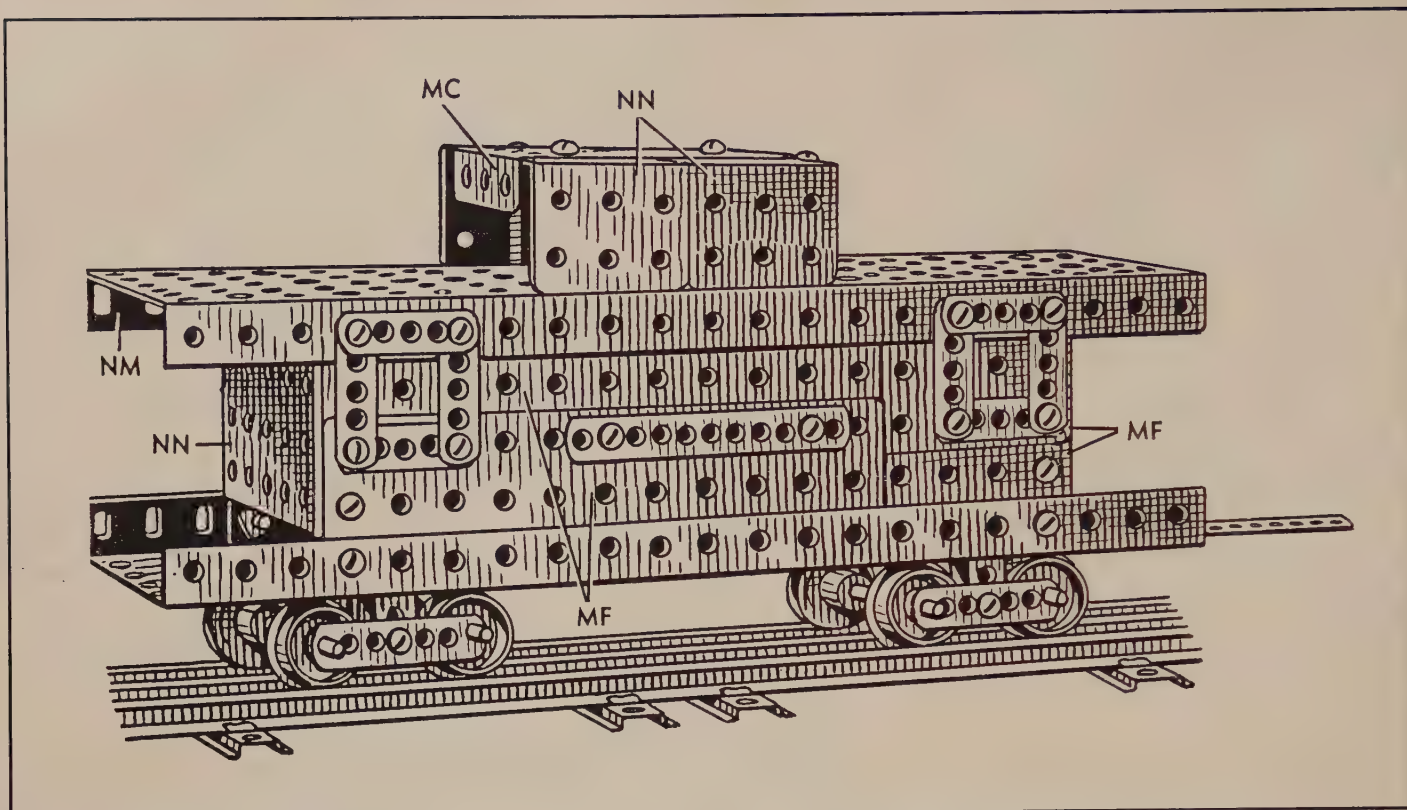


No. 7 1/2 Erector



No. 8 1/2 Erector  
Order Mat No. 5931

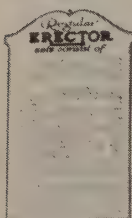
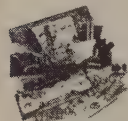




Hi boys! Send for this free book which tells all about my NEW 1927 ERECTOR

A new World's Standard-  
Real Engineering Thrills

NEW NO 7 1/2 ERECTOR \$15.00  
with Automobile Chassis



Why the New ERECTOR is the world's greatest toy

FEATURES

1. Complete set of 1,000 pieces
2. Complete set of 1,000 pieces

3. Complete set of 1,000 pieces
4. Complete set of 1,000 pieces

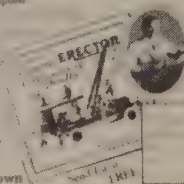
OTHER ERECTOR FEATURES

Boy's! Here's the greatest book I ever compiled

The new ERECTOR

"The world's greatest toy"

Don't miss today! At all stores where toys are shown



Hi boys! — how would you like to build  
models of concrete mixers, steam shovels,  
elevators, motors and dynamos that actually go?



M



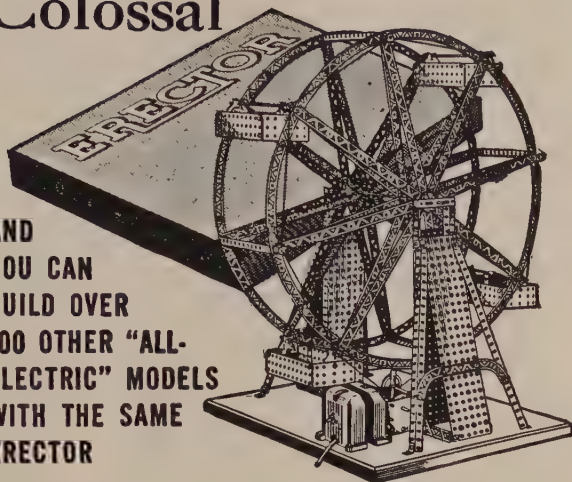
THE NEW

ERECTOR



## Boys! This Giant Ferris Wheel is Colossal

AND  
YOU CAN  
BUILD OVER  
100 OTHER "ALL-  
ELECTRIC" MODELS  
WITH THE SAME  
ERECTOR



The No. 8½ Erector is crammed with exciting electric features. 110-volt reversing electric engine with automobile type gear shift. Electric lights. Electro-magnet that grabs up steel girders before it touches them. Big supply of steel girders and other parts for building bascule bridge, magnetic crane, oil drilling rig, many other engine-driven, electrically lighted engineering marvels.

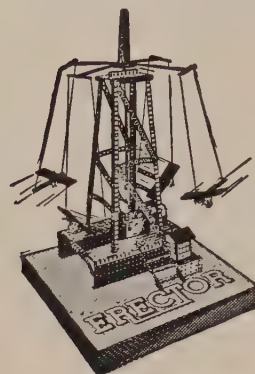
No. 8½ Erector—The All-Electric Set

**\$19<sup>95</sup>**

Other Erector sets from **\$1<sup>75</sup>**

*Store Name*

## Electrically driven Airplane Ride Other Action Models



*It's fun to build 'em*

The sensational No. 6½ Erector gives a boy everything he needs for building revolving airplane beacon, lift bridge, windmill pump, pile driver, many other exciting models. 110-volt electric engine supplies the power. Girders are made of steel—to build like real.

Sensational No. 6½A Erector **\$10<sup>95</sup>**

Other Erector sets from **\$1<sup>75</sup>**

*Store Name*

striped passenger cars. Many years after Erector was born, the A.C. Gilbert Co. marketed an S gauge model of this train. It consisted of the 21573 New Haven electric loco and the 24776 combine, 24816 Vista Dome and 24836 observation. The set was called *The Bankers* and can be seen in the D-2146 folder catalog for 1959-60. The loco and cars were made in earlier years with 3-digit numbers but not sold as a set. Finally, in the fall of 1911, after a gestation period of weeks and months, the idea that had been forming in his mind blossomed. Why not a toy for boys which would allow them to build objects by putting separate pieces together? He reasoned that young boys might be fascinated by such a toy just as he had been fascinated by the real thing. A.C. was already in the toy business in a way

and his contact with toy buyers and salesmen told him there was a market for good toys. And so we find that a railroad served as the inspiration for Erector which was the foundation of the A.C. Gilbert Co. which eventually became world famous not only for Erector, but also American Flyer trains!

As soon as he got home from that momentous train ride, A.C. got right to work with the same vigor and enthusiasm he always brought to any project he was interested in. He got some cardboard and began to experiment with different sizes and shapes. After he had what seemed like a good assortment, he got a can of nuts and bolts and began to "build" things out of his cardboard pieces. After he had worked out a few ideas, he took the cardboard pieces to his shop and had a

machinist reproduce them in metal. However, when he tried to put the metal parts together he found they didn't have the rigidity needed, especially when he attempted to put four of them together to form a square or box-shaped girder. But then he had another brilliant idea. He had a lip or groove put along the edge of each piece. Now the pieces would interlock in such a way that he could get the box shape he wanted and only needed two nuts and bolts to hold the four pieces together. With a little more experimentation, he knew he had something that was workable and worth developing further.

### NOT INTERESTED

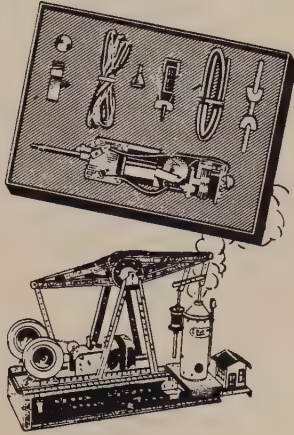
Much to A.C.'s amazement, John Petrie and Clyde Powers were not at all interested in his new idea when he



## NEW! **ERECTOR**

Smoke and "Choo-Choo"

KIT - \$5<sup>95</sup>



Add these exciting parts to Erector models of engines, boats, etc.—and they puff real smoke and reproduce realistic "choo-choo" sounds. Also, spectacular firebox glow can be placed under boiler. Kit can be used with all Erector sets—old or new—from No. 7½ and up, but smoke unit requires 7-15 volt Transformer.

Store Name



No. 4½ set circa 1949.

showed it to them. They felt this was too far outside the field of magic and they wanted no part of it. But A.C. was not discouraged. He knew his idea was a good one and worth developing. What's more, even though the Mysto Mfg. Co. was doing well, his selling activities led him to believe that the potential for growth in the field of magic was limited. And so, with the encouragement of his father, who always backed him fully in anything he did, he decided to continue the development of Erector on his own and to eventually enter the toy business. His partners' lack of interest in Erector led A.C.'s father to advise that A.C. should buy them out of the business. This was done on a very amicable basis, with A.C.'s father buying John Petrie's interest. Petrie stayed on as an employee, continuing with the magic end of the business.

With his father's backing, A.C.

plunged full steam ahead with Erector. He spent all of 1912 and most of 1913 developing his idea, expanding the factory into larger facilities, having production machinery designed and installed and tending to a million other details. He personally worked out a series of models, then had drawings of them made for inclusion in the instruction booklet, which he wrote himself. As Erector evolved, A.C. added gears, shafts, and pinions and also hit upon the idea of including an electric motor. These parts would enable the young modeler to not only build models, but to build models that would move and could be operated by the young engineer. Thus, Erector had the feature of motion, which would set it apart from its competition. Erector was not the first construction toy of its kind. Meccano, a British firm, had already marketed a similar idea. But Meccano did not have the realism of girder-shaped parts, nor did it have

motion. Even so, Meccano was the main competition of Erector for a long time, at least until A.C. Gilbert Company bought out the American division of Meccano in later years.

Finally, in 1913, Erector was ready. A.C. introduced it at the 1913 Toy Fair in New York City, and it was an instant success. Erector caught the attention of some of the biggest toy buyers in the country who gave A.C. advice, encouragement and big orders. After New York, Erector repeated its success at the Chicago Toy Fair and A.C. returned to New Haven with so many orders he had to float a loan to finance the large production effort. Indications are that Erector went on sale for the first time during the Christmas season of 1913. A.C. Gilbert was on his way! The Mysto Mfg. Co., soon to become the A.C. Gilbert Co., was now firmly established in the toy business. In 1913 the company grossed \$141,000



## NEW! **ERECTOR** Whistle Kit

**\$5<sup>95</sup>**



Blows long or short blasts by remote control. Brings new thrills to operating Erector action models. A wonderful addition to any Erector set—old or new. Or can be used by itself to toot messages by Morse Code to the gang. Operation requires 7-15 volt Transformer.

**STORE NAME**

with a net profit of \$45,000!

### ADVERTISING

All during its history, the A.C. Gilbert Co. was innovative in many aspects of product development and business practice. So it comes as no surprise when A.C. took a bold step (for 1913) for the promotion of Erector. For the first time a toy maker conducted a national advertising campaign, placing large ads (usually full page) in many of the leading magazines of the day which had national circulation. Some of these magazines were *Popular Mechanics*, *Saturday Evening Post* and *Good Housekeeping*. Another new idea which A.C. employed was the personal message. Most of the ads had a personal message from A.C. Gilbert to the boy or parent. Most of these ads included his picture and usually appeared over his signature. During his entire business career, A.C. made it a point that any message which purported to be from him actually was from him, written by him, personally.

In a full page ad which appeared in 1915 (magazine unknown) the entire copy is written in the first person by A.C. Gilbert. The coupon to send for a free copy of "Erector Tips" is addressed to A.C. Gilbert, The Mysto Mfg. Co. (The company's name was changed in 1916). A 1917 full page ad in the *Saturday Evening Post* includes a

## *Boys! Build this spectacular Railroad Bridge*



This famous No. 4½ Erector is made of steel to build like real. Contains powerful mechanical motor, four large wheels, girders in different sizes and other parts for building windmill, horizontal engine, trip hammer, trucks that run under their own power, many other models. Parts have equidistant holes for easy building.

Famous No. 4½  
Erector ..... **\$6<sup>95</sup>**

Other Erector  
sets from ..... **\$1<sup>75</sup>**

*Store Name*

## Copy Suggestions for Preparing Advertisements on Erector and Other Gilbert Toys

### ERECTOR

World's greatest construction toy.

Made of steel—to build like real.

One Erector set builds hundreds of spectacular mechanical marvels.

Only Erector builds the square girder with interlocking edges.

The powerful Erector electric engine makes models buzz with action.

Erector models are strong and sturdy because parts are locked together with "real engineering" nuts and bolts.

Amazing new Flex-O-Matic drive transmits power from electric engine to model in a steady, relentless surge.

No other construction set contains so many different parts.

### JUNIOR ERECTOR

First construction set that makes it easy for 2 to 6 year olds to build big, colorful models.

Parts are put together by pushing a hollow tube onto a knob—the easiest way for small fry to build.

Tubes come in 5 different lengths and colors.

Connectors have 10 knobs, so that tubes can be connected at 10 different angles.

Parts are made of safe plastic. No sharp edges—washable—fire-resistant—non-toxic.

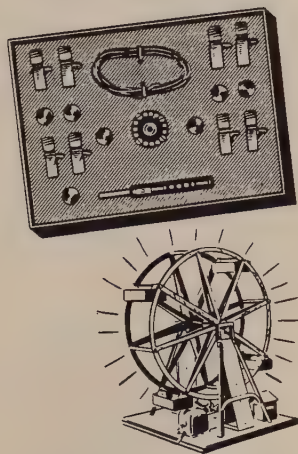
Parts are in brilliant red, yellow, blue, green and white.



# NEW! ERECTOR

## Illumination

### KIT ONLY \$1<sup>95</sup>



A great gift for every boy who owns or is getting an Erector set. Colored electric lights can be hooked up to Erector models in dozens of spectacular ways—to blink—to revolve—or remain stationary. Kit contains 4 red and 4 green bulbs, 8 light sockets, 8 feet of plastic covered wire, commutator and brush unit. Transformer from 7-15 volts necessary to operate.

## STORE NAME



ELEVATOR 8 1/2 Set

message from A.C. over his signature and alongside his picture. This ad features Erector but also includes other Gilbert toys such as the Mysto Magic set (the name Mysto was retained for the magic sets for many years), chemistry outfits and many others. In 1920, a two page ad appeared in *The American Boy*. Again we find the personal message complete with picture and signature.

It was around 1920 that Gilbert entered into a new form of advertising—commercial radio. The company was involved in the development of broadcasting for a short time and their broadcasting license was only the sixth one to be issued in the country. They produced, broadcast and sponsored their own programs and you can guess what the commercials were for. Later, after they had gotten out of broadcasting, they sponsored their own program called *A.C. Gilbert's Radio Sports Talks*.

A.C. Gilbert, himself, described the "Demonstration Car" as "probably the best promotion and advertising idea I ever had." The car was a full-sized Pullman coach, fixed up like a circus car and emblazoned with the Gilbert name and ads for Erector and other Gilbert toys. It toured the country, stopping in many towns and cities as it went. Inside were displays of all the Gilbert toys, with Erector featured most prominently. The car was equipped to receive radio transmissions direct from the factory and was a big hit in 1922. Although it was a costly form of advertisement, the benefits were also great. The car continued in use for several years until its value began to diminish, at which time it was discontinued.

### CONTEST ADVERTISING

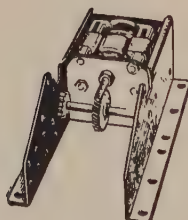
Another advertising technique which Gilbert was one of the first to

use was the contest. The entrants were awarded prizes for the best models designed using Erector. The models were then included in the next instruction book. Gilbert started using this type of contest about 1915 and was still using it in the late '50's.

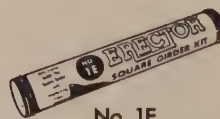
One more aspect of Gilbert advertising should be noted. This was the use of a railroad theme to illustrate models which could be built with Erector. In the 1915 ad mentioned earlier, two boys are working on a spectacular bridge, with towers taller than the boys. And passing over the bridge is a Standard Gauge train! Another full page ad in the November, 1925 issue of *The Youth's Companion* shows a boy completing a large coal loader. Alongside the loader is a hopper made entirely from Erector. Even the rails and ties are Erector parts. The coal loader is curiously similar to the 752 Seaboard Coal loader made from 1946 to 1950 for S gauge trains! The railroad idea was carried to its logical conclusion when Gilbert introduced the Erector Hudson in 1931.

### PROOF OF THE PUDDING

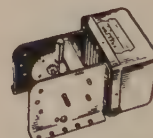
Way back in 1911 A.C. Gilbert knew he had a good idea in Erector. But how good was it? The fantastic success of the company was one indication. But another is the fact that even before 1920, less than seven years after Erector was introduced, the word Erector was so well known that it dropped its capital letter and went into the language as a common word. It was used to refer to any kind of boy's construction toy, much the same as people today use the word "kleenex" to refer to any kind of facial tissue. The word erector can still be found in the dictionary today, although it is now defined as a noun meaning one who or that which



No. P55 Motor



No. 1E  
Square Girder Kit

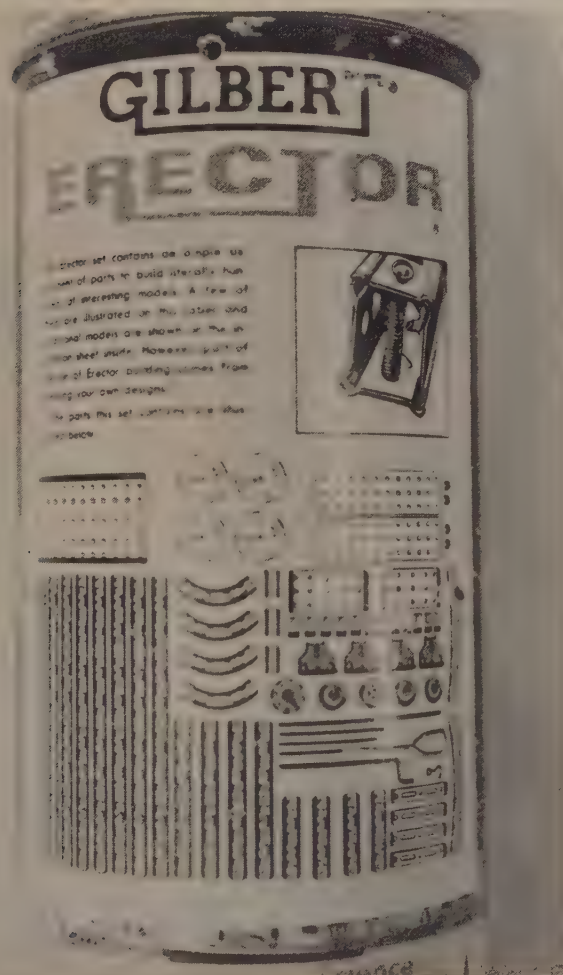


No. A47 Motor





TOP, LEFT: The 6½ with paper sticker; 6½ in red and white box, circa 1965; 5-digit set. TOP, RIGHT: The No. 7½ Engineer set of 1951 packaged in cardboard. BOTTOM, LEFT. Parts shown on 10021 set. BOTTOM, RIGHT. Catalogs that feature Erector and Flyer trains. Top is D-1536 1949 catalog, other is D-1604 from 1950.







The 10021, Young Builder's Set, 1958. This is one of the two smallest sets for '58 which had a parts list on the label. The container could be used as a part of the model being built.



The No. 10094, Master Builder's Set, circa 1960. This set was the top of the line. It is unusual in that the box has two lids hinged at the sides rather than the more traditional one lid hinged at the rear.

erects. Eventually, the U.S. Post Office and the city of New Haven designated the area around the Gilbert factory as Erector Square. The company used Erector Square as their mailing address for many years.

#### TYPICAL SET

Let's take a look now at Erector sets

down through the years and get an idea of what the typical set was like. Again we turn to 1915, the earliest year for which I have information. Prices in that year ranged from \$1.00 to \$25.00. The No. 4 set was the smallest set which contained a motor. This set had 571 parts and sold for \$5.00. It, and all larger sets, was

packaged in a "handsome oak cabinet." Smaller sets were packed in cardboard boxes. In 1920, prices had gone up to a range of \$2.00 to \$35.00. In 1924, a special set was offered. I don't have information to indicate if it was offered before or after 1924, but in any case, it was unique. It was called the No. 5 Erector Machinery Set. I'll let the 1924 edition of the "Gilbert Year Book" describe it for you:

It's a complete set of parts for building a Machine Shop Model, including a lathe, emery and buffing wheel, and drill press with standard Erector girders, angles, nuts, etc., with which to make the frame work for the shop. The machine parts are made of cast iron and they look just like the parts in real machines and are all to be fastened on shaftings and pulleys so that the whole shop can actually be made to run.

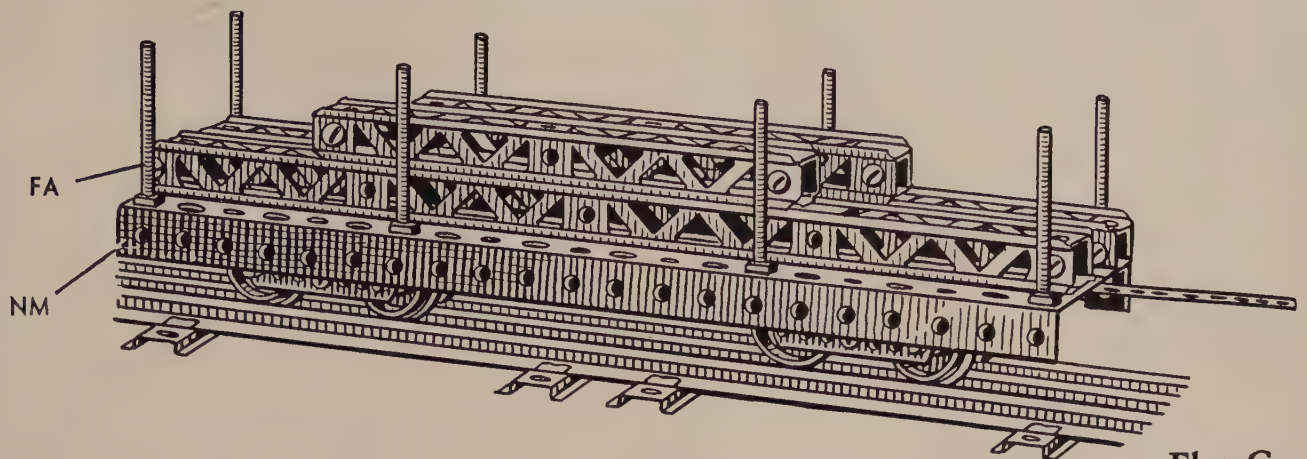
The magazine ad I have for 1925 doesn't mention the No. 5 set, so I don't know if it was continued in the line or not. By 1925, Gilbert had included special parts in all the larger sets to broaden the scope and realism of the models the sets could build. For example, the "Super Erector No. 7" set (not to be confused with the regular No. 7 set) included the "New Erector Boiler" and the "Steam Shovel." The No. 8 set had the Erector Dredge Bucket and the No. 10 set featured the Giant Fly Wheel. Of course, any given set included all the features of all the smaller sets.

#### PRICES GO UP

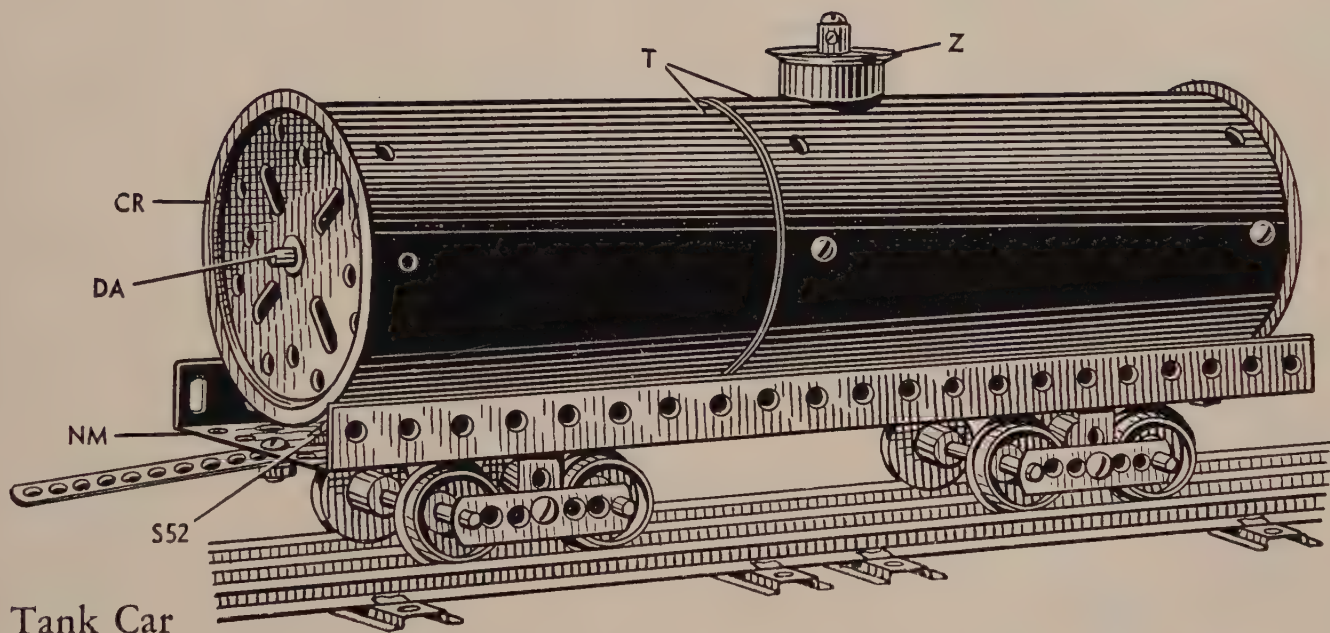
By 1927 prices had gone up again. The smallest set was back to \$1.00, but the top of the line now sold for \$50.00. Here's a rundown of the complete line for 1927: Set No. 1 was the beginner's set. It had 204 parts which built 278 models and sold for \$1.00. No. 3 was "the set with the Gears and the Big Red Wheels." It had 169 parts and sold for \$3.00. The No. 4 set had an electric motor, 235 parts and sold for \$5.00. The "Super No. 7 Erector" set built the steam shovel. It had 473 parts which built 533 models and sold for \$10.00. The "Wonderful 7½ Motorized Erector" was new for 1927. This is apparently the first year a "½" was used as part of the set number. This curious numbering system would be used for many years. The set contained all the parts to build a truck chassis. These included fenders, engine cowlings, steering wheel, bumpers, etc. These parts were also includ-



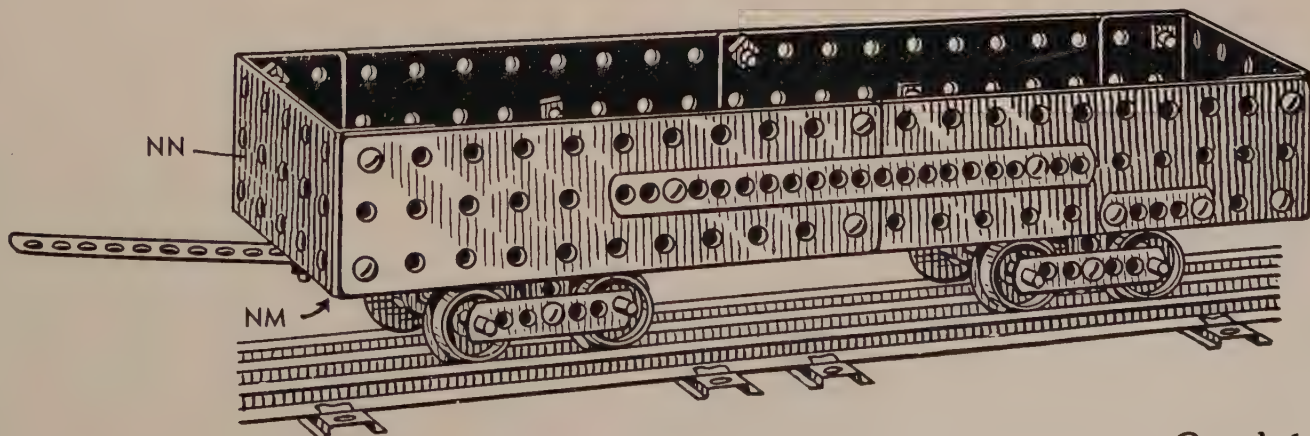
# Models Built with No. 10½ Erector



Flat Car



Tank Car



Gondola



ed in all the larger sets. The No. 8 set was the "Trumodel Set" and included the "3-Drum Hoist," "Trip Bucket" and "New Giant Boiler Plates." It had 922 parts for \$25.00. The top of the line was the No. 10 set. It had over 2,000 parts, built "unlimited models," and sold for \$50.00. Two special sets were offered in 1927. One was the "No. A—Big Girder Set." As the name implies, this set had much larger parts than the regular sets. It had 422 parts but only built 42 models. It sold for \$7.50. The other special set was the "No. 3005 (a deviation from the numbering sequence) Erector Electrical Set—that Electrifies and Illuminates" for \$5.00.

It appears that the late 1920's and early 1930's saw wooden boxes giving way to metal boxes for the larger sets. While I have observed these metal boxes in blue and green, the vast majority of them were bright red. The January, 1982 issue of the *Train Collector's Quarterly*, published by the Train Collectors Association, gives an interesting insight into this particular shade of red. On page 37 of that issue is a picture of a red cocktail shaker. The accompanying article tells how A.C. Gilbert bought the shaker at Abercrombie and Fitch. He instructed that this was the shade of red his Erector sets were to be. He kept the shaker in his desk and occasionally took it to the painting department to check the color match.

#### METAL BOXES

In addition to the change to metal boxes, there were also a few changes in the sets offered. The Super No. 7 was now called the "New Big 77" set. The No. A-Big Girder set was now the "B" set. The number of models it built was increased from 42 to 57 which included the Ferris Wheel and the price increased a dollar to \$8.50. Added to the line is the No. C set. It built an airplane and sold for \$10.00.

Let's jump ahead now about 20 years to a time a little closer to our own era. The year is 1949. World War II, which put a stop to all Erector production, has been over long enough that everything was back to normal at Erector Square. Erector is still going strong, of course, with a full line of sets. The sets are still numbered, as before, with every set carrying a "½" as part of the set number. Most sets also now have names. We now have the No. 1½, Dandy Beginner Set; No.

2½ Apprentice Set; the Famous No. 4½ Set (No. 4 in earlier years) is still the smallest set which contains a motor, but it's now a wind-up motor instead of electric; the "Sensational No. 6½A Erector; No. 7½, The Engineer's Set; No. 8½, The All-Electric Set; No. 9½, The Parachute Jump Set; No. 10½, The Merry-Go-Round Set; and the top of the line, No. 12½, Remote Control Set. There was also something called the No. 12½A, Merry-Go-Round Parts Kit. This kit contained the special parts, such as the horses, for the merry-go-round. When combined with the 9½ or the 12½ set, a complete merry-go-round could be built. A new feature apparently introduced for the first time in 1949 was called "Flex-O-Matic." This was a flexible cable with couplings on each end for transmitting power from the motor to the model without the use of the gear train on the motor. Flex-O-Matic was included in all sets from 6½ through 12½ with the exception of the 10½ set. Prices in 1949 ranged from \$1.75 to \$50.00. The top of the line No. 12½, Remote Control Set, was really something. It had three separate motors, rubber treads for building bulldozers or half-tracks and Flex-O-Matic. But in addition to all that, there was also remote control. One of the three motors mentioned earlier was the "new remote control engine," and had a reversing capability. It required a transformer and control button, which were included with the set. The transformer, which was included with the other larger sets, was also used to power the lights for illuminated models. Sturdy steel boxes were still used for all but the two smallest sets which were still in cardboard.

There were not many changes in 1950. The biggest change was to the No. 10 set, which was now called the "Amusement Park Set" and built both the Parachute Jump and the Merry-Go-Round. The D-1604 catalog gives a good rundown on the Erector Accessories, as they are called. The first was the No. 1E, Erector Square Girder Kit. It sold for \$1.00 and came packed in a cardboard tube. It contained an assortment of girders, nuts and bolts to supplement the parts in any other set. Next was the No. 5, Erector Illumination Kit. It contained four green and four red light bulbs, eight sockets, eight feet of wire, and a brush unit and commutator for use on revolving models. The lights could be made to

burn steady or to blink. It sold for \$1.95 and did not include the transformer needed for the lights. The No. 6, Erector Whistle Kit had obvious applications for tugboats, lift bridges and other models. It consisted of a whistle unit, control box, and power leads and sold for \$6.95. The No. 7, Erector Smoke and Choo-Choo Kit is of particular interest to American Flyer S gauge collectors. It was actually the old smoke-in-tender unit as used in the steam locos in 1946 and 1947. From the catalog illustration, it appears to be the identical unit as used in the locos. The kit also contained wire, smoke fluid, funnel and rubber tubing, as well as a red bulb and socket to create a "realistic firebox glow." Price was \$7.95. Gilbert also sold the No. A-47 motor, No. P-55, remote control motor, and the No. 2 transformer (clearly labeled American Flyer!) separately.

#### MODIFY PACKAGING

In 1951, the Korean War forced Gilbert to modify the packaging for Erector. Although they were not forced to stop production completely, as in WWII, it was necessary, due to material shortages, to package the medium size sets in cardboard boxes. These boxes were made of a very heavy gauge of cardboard and had hinged lids. All sets up to, and including the No. 7½ were packed in cardboard and it was not until 1955 that metal boxes were used again for the intermediate sets. The war may also have forced the demise of the No. 12½ set. It was not cataloged in 1951 or thereafter for quite a few years.

The next big event in the history of Erector came in 1957 and American Flyer collectors can guess what it was. Just as Gilbert changed the numbering system for the trains, so too, they went to a five digit numbering system for Erector. Catalog #D-2037 (not one of the series of train catalogs) pictures of the sets clearly show the old "½" numbers on the set boxes, but the descriptions list five digit numbers. For example, the old 10½, Amusement Park Set, is now No. 10080. The old 12½ set finally re-appears as the No. 10091 set, now priced at \$65.00, up from \$50.00. Another interesting change was that at least one set was available in either a metal box or cardboard. Set No. 10051 (old 6½) was \$17.95 in a metal box or, as set No. 10046, was \$15.95 in a cardboard box.

The year 1958 brought another interesting change in packaging. The



two smallest sets, No. 10011, Beginner's Set and No. 10021, Young Builders Set, were packed in a large round cardboard tube similar to that used for Tinkertoys. The tube itself could be used as an integral part of the model being built. The lid and bottom end of the tube had a small hole in the center and the tube had a row of holes along the top and bottom edge. The tube could be used as the tank for a tank truck, boiler for a crude locomotive or as a body for a robot. A couple of other new ideas were incorporated in these sets. One was that the instructions were printed in white on a piece of heavy blue paper, the idea being to simulate blueprints. The other new feature, which I find particularly interesting, was a parts list for the set printed on the tube label.

#### THE BEGINNING OF THE END

We all know what was in store for Gilbert as the decade of the '60's began. Perhaps it was the death of Mr. Gilbert that was the signal for the beginning of the end. Things were not going well, and they would get worse. Just as Pikemaster signaled the decline of the trains, so too, Erector began to decline. For one thing, the girders, which were the central element of the realism that A.C. was so proud of, eventually became just a strip of metal with a row of holes punched in it. Packaging, too, took a turn for the worse, becoming nothing more than a large, flimsy paperboard box with cellophane windows and paperboard inserts to take up room and create the impression the set had a lot more parts than it really did. And worst of all, plastic began to find its way into the sets. The parts themselves were just dumped into the box in a jumbled mess, whereas before, they were neatly arranged and held in place by metal clips.

But they didn't completely give up on Erector. They continued to develop new ideas and new sets. In 1965, they brought out Erector Constructor. There were three sets in the series, each one based on a different theme. Each set had all the parts needed to build one of five different models for a given theme. There was the Military Vehicles Set, which built a tank, jeep, armored car, howitzer or munitions carrier. The other sets were the Road Building Equipment Set and the Cars And Trucks Set, each one building five vehicles. Another "new" idea for 1965 was "Ride-em Erector" with gigantic

parts to build any of five toys that the boy could then get on and ride. This idea didn't work. A boy small enough to ride the toys was too small and too young to put it together. They should have checked the company archives. A.C. tried this idea prior to 1920 and it didn't work then, either, and for the same reason.

#### ERECTOR LIVES ON

Even though A.C. Gilbert and his company are gone now, his wonderful creation lives on. When the company went out of business in 1966, Gabriel Industries bought the rights to Erector and still produces it today. They even used the Gilbert name, although I'm not sure if they still do. The sets are packed in plastic boxes and have some plastic parts, but they are still the same basic toy invented in 1911.

Erector Sets, as well as other Gilbert toys, are collectible. They're out there hiding in many of the same places the trains are. Prices vary widely. Anything in a wooden box is desirable and anything bearing the Mysto name is a real find.

One of the frustrating things about collecting Erector Sets is trying to decide if the set you've found is anywhere near complete. Common sense is a good place to start. If the box is almost empty, negotiate your price accordingly, but don't pass it up. The box alone is worth something. One way to get an idea if your find is mostly there is to look for the special parts such as the motor, watchman's shanty, electro-magnet, etc. Look at the picture in the lid. This is usually the largest model that set will build. Now look for the special parts to build it. If they're there and the box looks reasonably full, you've probably got a fairly complete set.

Except for the 1958 sets I mentioned, I have never come across any information regarding the original assortment of parts contained in any one set. I have heard there are Erector collectors who have worked up lists of original parts assortments from mint sets they have found.

#### LEARN MORE ABOUT IT

My main source of information for this article was A.C. Gilbert's autobiography, *The Man Who Lives In Paradise*, co-authored by Marshall McClintock and published in 1954 by Rinehart and Co., Inc., of New York. The book is pretty scarce and not easy to find, but if you can locate a copy, it makes fascinating reading. Occasionally one will turn up at a train meet or

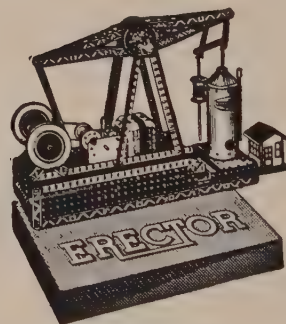
on an American Flyer for sale list.

Earlier in this article I made reference to a number of old magazine ads. These contain a wealth of information. Old copies of such magazines as *Saturday Evening Post*, *Popular Mechanics*, *The Youths Companion* and others are not hard to find. Look for them at garage sales, flea markets and antique shows. Many of these same magazines contain interesting ads for trains, as well.

Another good source of information is the catalogs put out by Gilbert. Many of the train catalogs have several pages devoted to Erector and other toys. The covers of several of the catalogs have some interesting illustrations combining Erector and Flyer in some spectacular layouts. Some good examples are D-1536, 1949; D-1604, 1950; D-1640, 1951; and D-1677, 1952.

The **S Gaugian** has also published some interesting articles about the A.C. Gilbert Co. The September/October, 1978 issue contains *Demise of The A.C. Gilbert Company*, the story of how the company went out of business. The September/October, 1980 issue begins a series of articles by Carl R. Konkel called *A.C. Gilbert's Paradise—today*. These are all very interesting reading for those interested in A.C. Gilbert and the company he founded.

## Walking Beam Engine

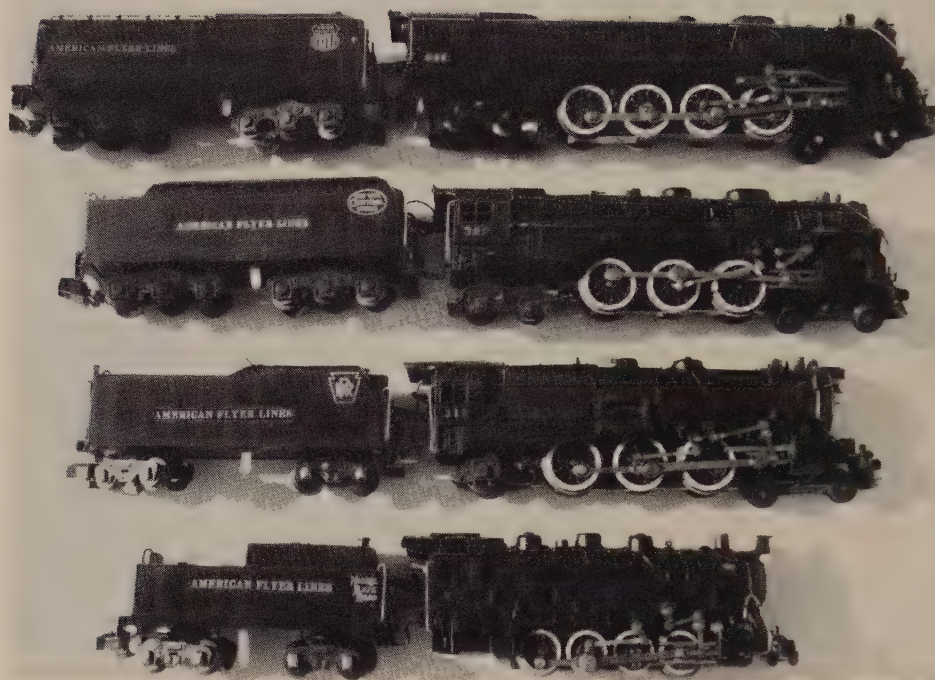


And that's not all! The 7½ Erector builds marine, hoisting, oscillating and horizontal engines. Also, derricks, bridges, motor trucks, numerous other models that buzz with action. Set contains 110-volt electric engine with gear shift, polished boiler shell, big array of steel parts.

No. 7½ Erector—  
The Engineer's Set **\$1500**

Other Erector sets from **\$175**





1947 versions of the 332, 322, 312, 342 tender smoke engines.

# American Flyer tender smoke engines

## *Realism was the watchword*

By Robert J. Tufts  
Photos by the author  
Illustrations by R. Brooks Stover

Immediately after World War II, the A.C. Gilbert Company and the Lionel Corporation turned their war-time efforts back to producing toy trains. The war years had been a terrible drain on the country's resources and held bad memories for many families. Both toy companies were eager to replace those bad memories with good ones. The rush was on to bring out trains that caught the public's attention.

The A.C. Gilbert Company launched an all-out effort to be something different. Realism was the watchword. The whole line was changed from the O gauge system to the smaller and sleeker 3/16" S gauge system. Two-rail tracks, prototype steam engines and near scale cars all added to the impact. But the real eye stoppers were the engines that blew smoke and had realistic "choo-choo" sounds.

### LIONEL'S SMOKE

The Lionel Corp. also brought out smoking engines at the same time, and virtually on the same day. Smoking engines were the best kept secrets the two companies had. But even with all the secrecy, smoking engines became

a reality in both lines at the same time. This is a tribute to the keen competition between the two toy train giants.

Except for the first year, the Lionel smoking engine used a white pellet that was placed down the smoke stack and rested on a metal plate. When the plate was heated with electricity, the pellet dissolved and formed smoke. The smoke was blown back out the smoke stack by air forced through a small opening as the drive wheels turned on the engine.

The A.C. Gilbert smoking engine had the smoke unit driven by a totally separate motor and bellows located in the tender. Smoke fluid was squeezed from a plastic capsule into a small tube on the top of the tender and collected in the smoke chamber. When current was applied to a very fine, nichrome wire coil in the well, the fluid would evaporate and form smoke. The separate motor in the tender was connected to a bellows that created the "choo-choo" sound and blew the smoke through a long rubber hose out the smoke stack in the engine (see Figure 1).

The advantage of this first American

Flyer smoke unit was its ability to blow smoke while the engine was in neutral. Realistic pictures were easy to take with the engine collecting a large head of steam while idling on a siding. The rather pleasant, cedar scented smell of the smoke also added to the user's enjoyment.

### DISADVANTAGES

Major disadvantages also existed for this system. The bellows material tended to fray and get holes in it, reducing the "choo-choo" to a wheeze and causing the smoke to dribble out of the smoke stack. The same result would occur if the hose had a kink in it someplace inside the engine. And if the hose was totally blocked or slipped off the smoke box blow pipe, the user was treated to an engine roaring down the track while totally engulfed in a realistic looking cab fire.

The other major disadvantage of the tender smoke unit was the noisy, rasping sound that occurred when the bellows linkage and gears became a bit worn. Some of the more heavily used units became so noisy they drowned out the "choo-choo" sound the unit produced. The tender smoke



Figure 3

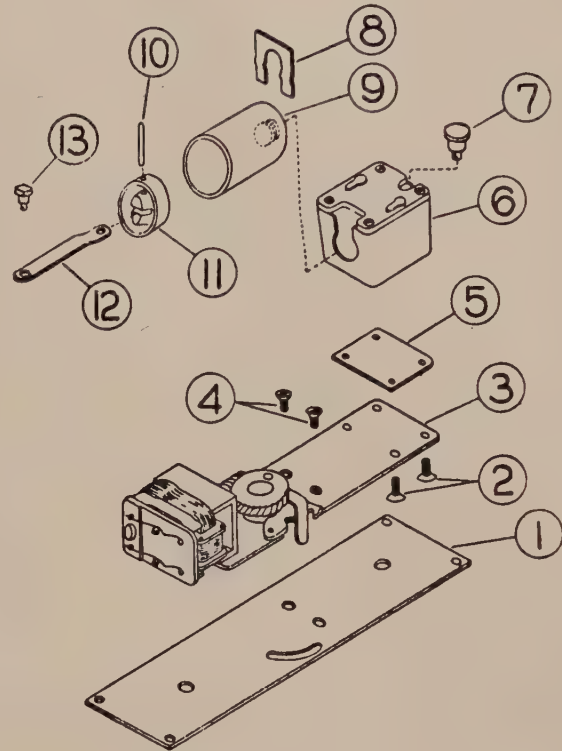
## Instructions for the conversion of bellows-type Smoke and "Choo-choo" Unit to piston-type in American Flyer 3/16" Scale Model Locomotives

### OPERATION

1. Compress bellows and remove smoke unit from tender chassis by taking out the two screws near the center of the unit.
2. Remove the bellows lever stud and the fuel nozzle from the unit. These parts will be used in the new unit.
3. Invert the unit and remove the four screws in the bottom so that the Control Box and bellows assembly may be taken off. Disconnect all leads from the top of the control box.

THE NEW REPLACEMENT UNIT MAY NOW BE INSTALLED AS FOLLOWS:

4. Assemble control box (#6) and gasket (#5) to base and motor assembly (#3) with four screws (#2) and tighten.
5. Reassemble smoke unit to tender chassis (#1) with two screws (#4) and tighten.
6. Assemble piston lever (#12) to piston (#11) with piston pin (#10).
7. Insert piston assembly into cylinder (#9).
8. Insert cylinder assem. into control box and lock in place with cylinder retainer (#8). Attach piston lever to worm gear with piston lever stud (#13).
9. Resolder connections as they were, replace the fuel nozzle (#7) and the unit is ready for operation.
10. Before re-assembling the chassis to the tender body, oil all moving parts of the smoke unit thoroughly.



### PARTS

### LIST

| Part No.   | Description                          |
|------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5 PA10167  | Bottom Gaskets .....                 |
| 6 XA10149A | Control Box Assembly .....           |
| 8 PA10769  | Cylinder Retainer .....              |
| 9 PA10772  | Cylinder .....                       |
| 10 PA10520 | Piston Pin .....                     |
| 11 PA10518 | Piston .....                         |
| 12 PA10771 | Piston Lever .....                   |
| 13 PA7421  | Piston Lever Stud .....              |
| 1.....     | Tender Chassis .....                 |
| 2.....     | Screws (Control Box to Base) .....   |
| 3.....     | Smoke Unit Base and Motor Asm. ....  |
| 4.....     | Screws (Smoke Unit to Chassis) ..... |
| 7.....     | Fuel Nozzle and Stud .....           |

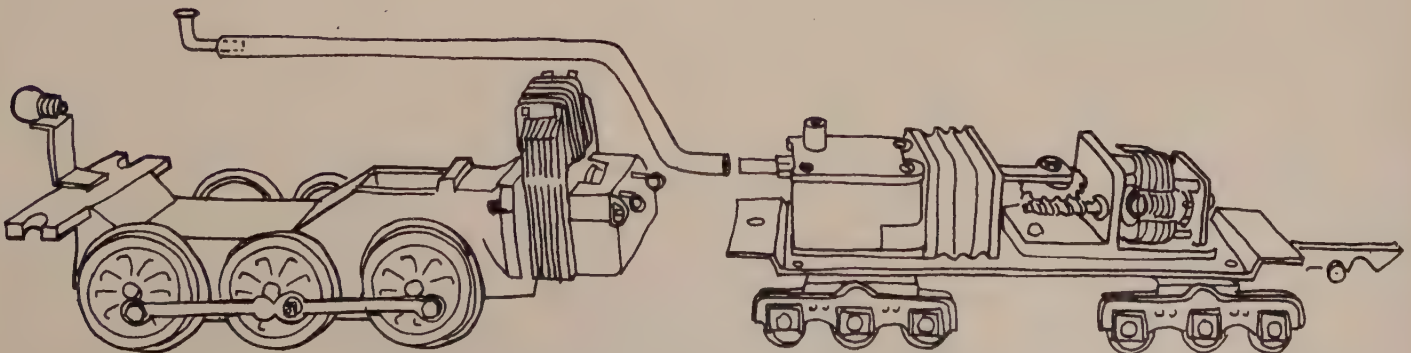




Table 1  
A.C. GILBERT  
STEAM ENGINE NUMBERING SYSTEM  
1946 - 1957

| Engine               | Light    | Light &<br>Choo Choo | Light<br>Smoke &<br>Choo Choo | Light<br>Smoke<br>Choo Choo<br>Pull-mor | Light<br>Smoke<br>Choo Choo<br>Whistle | Light<br>Smoke<br>Choo Choo<br>Air Chime<br>Whistle | Light<br>Smoke<br>Choo Choo<br>Pull-mor<br>Air Chime<br>Whistle | Light<br>Pull-mor | Light<br>Choo Choo<br>Pull-mor | Light<br>Pull-mor<br>Whistle |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 4-4-2<br>(Atlantic)  | 299, 300 | 301                  | 302                           | 303                                     |                                        |                                                     |                                                                 | 307               | 308                            |                              |
| 4-6-2<br>(Pennsy K5) | 310      | 311                  | 312                           | 313                                     | 314                                    | 315                                                 | 316                                                             |                   |                                |                              |
| 4-6-4<br>(Hudson)    | 320      |                      | 321, 322                      |                                         | 324*                                   | 325                                                 | 326                                                             |                   |                                |                              |
| 4-8-4<br>(Northern)  |          |                      | 332                           |                                         | 334*                                   | 335                                                 | 336                                                             |                   |                                |                              |
| 0-8-0<br>(NKP)       |          |                      | 342                           | 343                                     |                                        |                                                     | 346                                                             |                   |                                |                              |
| 4-6-2<br>(Bullet)    | 350      |                      | 356                           |                                         |                                        |                                                     |                                                                 |                   |                                |                              |
| 4-6-2<br>(C&NW)      | 353      |                      | 354                           | 283                                     | 285                                    |                                                     |                                                                 | 287               |                                | 289                          |
| 4-6-2<br>(Pacific)   |          |                      | 282                           | 293                                     |                                        | 295                                                 | 296                                                             |                   |                                |                              |
|                      |          |                      | 290                           |                                         |                                        |                                                     |                                                                 |                   |                                |                              |

Note: Numbering system ignores suffixes and prefixes such as 312AC, K325, 314AW, etc.

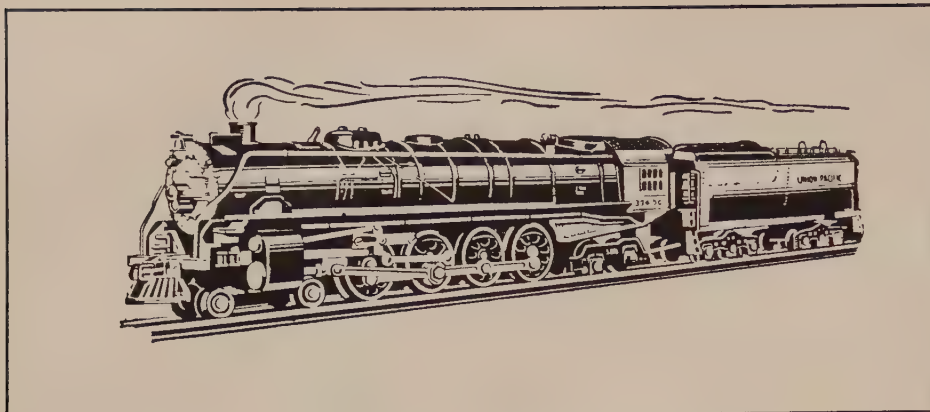
\*Electronic



Table 2  
**ROSTER OF TENDER SMOKE ENGINES**

| Number | Year | AC/DC | Engine Type        | Identifying Features                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------|------|-------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 312    | 1946 | AC    | 4-6-2 Pennsy K5    | Two spring loaded, brass buttons on underside of motor chassis, round head valve gear rivets. "Pennsylvania" on tender.                                                                   |
|        | 1947 | AC    | 4-6-2 Pennsy K5    | No brass buttons, hex head valve gear rivets, "American Flyer Lines" and "PRR" in keystone on tender.                                                                                     |
| 322    | 1946 | AC    | 4-6-4 Hudson       | Two spring loaded, brass buttons on underside of motor chassis, round head valve gear rivets. "New York Central" on tender.                                                               |
|        | 1947 | AC    | 4-6-4 Hudson       | No brass buttons, hex head valve gear rivets, "American Flyer Lines" and "New York Central System" in oval on tender.                                                                     |
| 332    | 1946 | AC    | 4-8-4 Northern     | Two spring loaded, brass buttons on underside of motor chassis, round head valve gear rivets. "Union Pacific" on tender.                                                                  |
|        | 1947 | DC    | 4-8-4 Northern     | No brass buttons, no reverse unit, no lever protruding through slot in boiler top, hex head valve gear rivets. "American Flyer Lines" and "Union Pacific" in shield on tender.            |
| 342    | 1946 | AC    | 0-8-0 NKP Switcher | Two spring loaded, brass buttons on underside of motor chassis, round head valve gear rivets. "Nickel Plate Road" on tender.                                                              |
|        | 1947 | AC    | 0-8-0 NKP Switcher | No brass buttons, hex head valve gear rivets, "American Flyer Lines" and "Nickel Plate Road" in small letters on tender.                                                                  |
|        | 1947 | DC    | 0-8-0 NKP Switcher | No brass buttons, no reverse unit, no lever protruding through slot in boiler top, hex head valve gear rivets, "American Flyer Lines" and "Nickel Plate Road" in small letters on tender. |





unit also tended to make the "choo-choo" sound occur too frequently for the speed of the engine. This was directly attributable to the second motor being totally unrelated in its operation to the motor moving the drive wheels.

Even with all these disadvantages (most of which were overcome in just a few years), the American Flyer smoking engines were a delight to behold.

The A.C. Gilbert Company produced five smoking steam engines during the years immediately following World War II. These were the 4-4-2 Atlantic (lowest in price), the 4-6-2 Pennsy K-5, the 4-6-4 Hudson, the 0-8-0 Nickel Plate switcher and the 4-8-4 Union Pacific Northern (top of the line). All five engines had diecast boilers and the higher priced engines had diecast tenders to provide extra weight and to hold the smoke unit.

Although the smoking tender was experimented with on all five engines, the A.C. Gilbert Company went into production with only four of them. Tender smoke units were not placed in the 4-4-2 Atlantic for both price and space consideration. In addition, the medium priced engines could also be purchased at a cheaper price without the smoke and "choo-choo" sound. Only the two most expensive engines came with smoke and "choo-choo" as standard equipment.

#### NUMBERING SYSTEM

To distinguish between the smoking and non-smoking engines, the A.C. Gilbert Company adopted a numbering system in 1946 which became the basis for their line for many years. The system, as cataloged, was fairly simple to remember. Engines with numbers ending in zero (300, 310, 320) had neither smoke nor "choo-choo" sound. Engines with numbers ending in one (301, 311) did not smoke but still had the "choo-choo" sound. Only

engines ending in two (302, 312, 322, 332, 342) had both smoke and "choo-choo" sounds.

This numbering scheme was carried for many years as new steam engines were added to the line and new features added such as Pull-mor and whistles as shown in Table 1. The numbering system ignores prefixes such as K (knuckle coupler) and suffixes such as AC (alternating current), DC (direct current) and AW (alternating current, DC whistle). Note that not every combination was produced. Note also that some numbered engines (290, 321, 353, 356) did not follow the numbering scheme.

Tender smoke units were only produced in 1946 and 1947 for the 312, 322, 332, and 342 engines (see Figure 2 and Table 2). From 1948 on, the tender smoke units were replaced with piston driven smoke unit in the boiler which made a more realistic "choo-choo" sound and was geared to the drive wheels.

#### NEW DRIVE UNIT

This new piston driven smoke unit corrected the frayed bellows, noisy mechanism, out-of-synch puffing and blocked smoke tube problems mentioned earlier. But this was at the expense of puffing smoke while in neutral. The piston driven, boiler smoke unit would only blow smoke while the engine was moving.

In 1948 and 1949, Gilbert also produced piston driven conversion kits for existing tender smoke engines (see Figure 3). This unnumbered kit was used to convert the bellows apparatus in the tender to a piston driven mechanism. This conversion kit did a much better job of blowing smoke and solved the problem of frayed bellows losing its "oomph." In fact, in head-to-head "puff-offs," converted piston type tender smoke units were easily far superior to the piston type in the boiler when it came to puffing

power. This was due to the faster motor in the tender which could fill the room with big billows of smoke in just minutes.

The passing of the tender smoke unit marked the end of a short era in toy trains. It was the only smoke unit produced in any gauge that would blow smoke while the engine was idling. Its replacement with the piston driven boiler unit was done for practical reasons. But for some of the children of the world, much of the glamor of the American Flyer smoking engine was gone. After all, a smoke unit in the boiler was the way Lionel did it.





# Gilbert Hall of Science

Opened only a few years before the war, the Gilbert Hall of Science at Fifth Avenue and 25th Street, New York City, ranks as the greatest exhibit of scientific toys in the world.

Admission is free to the public and it is visited each year by hundreds of thousands of boys and girls, parents and relatives. In addition, uncounted millions more stop in front of the street-level display windows to watch the ever-fascinating exhibits of Erector, American Flyer Trains and other Gilbert scientific toys.

The impact of war transformed the Gilbert Hall of Science into an important "field headquarters" for planning and expediting our production of war materials; and brought to Mr. William D. Perry and his staff new and heavy responsibilities.

The central location of the Hall of Science made it a logical meeting place for conferences with Army and Navy officers. Many have been the times when lights burned far into the night as these officials and Gilbert representatives worked over some knotty problem. Many of our expeditors maintained their offices in the Hall of Science, as working out of New York enabled them to save much valuable time in contacting our widely scattered sources of supply.

Even the display windows at the Hall of Science played a part in the war program. In 1944, in cooperation with the Republic Aviation Corporation, the main Fifth Avenue window featured an exhibit of the famous Thunderbolt fighter planes, for which The A. C. Gilbert Company manufactures certain essential parts. This exhibit attracted tremendous crowds and served as a constant reminder to the public to buy more and more War Bonds.

Looking back, was this array of Flyer a dream or real? Yes, it was real.





# 1952 Train suggestions

October 19, 1951

## MEMORANDUM

TO: H.L. Trisch

CC: A.C. Gilbert, A.C. Gilbert, Jr., K.P. Fallon, J.A. Wall, G.F. Schumacher, B. Repplier, R.E. Smith, M.H. Frisbie, W.D. Perry

FROM: M.H. Romer

SUBJECT: Suggestions for 1952 Train Line

The time is here for the laying out of the 1952 Train Line, and the following are a few suggestions which I feel should be given careful consideration when the Train Line is released.

1. ADD THE NO. 648 TRACK CLEANING CAR TO THE LINE. *ADD TO LINE FOR '52* (was added)  
This item is all tooled up and ready to go; we receive a great many requests for an item of this type, and it would make a good separate sales item.

2. ADD TRACK CLEANING FLUID TO THE LINE. *ADD TO LINE FOR '52* (was added)  
This would be a companion item to the Track Cleaning Car. This item has come up from time to time around here, but was always let ride; now, in the past year, four different brands of track cleaning fluid have hit the market. This would be a high profit item, costing us, completely bottled and packaged, about 18¢, and selling for \$1.00.

3. ADD THE REFRIGERATOR CAR TO THE LINE (IN CORRECT COLORS). *ADD 647 FOR '52* (was added)  
This car is tooled up and is another item for which we have received many requests. This would be a colorful car and is one of the most common type cars used in real railroading. This would help give our rolling stock a little more variety.

4. PUT THE NO. 698 REVERSE LOOP KIT BACK IN THE LINE. *ADD FOR '52* (was added)  
I don't know why it is off the price list, and not in the catalog, as it is a necessity in large layouts where reverse loops are installed for turning trains around. Our competitors use the reverse loop situation when talking down our two-rail track.

5. PUT OUT BOTH DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES IN SEVERAL COLORS AND ROAD NAMES. *O.K. BYO FOR '52* (Burlington not B&O)  
There would be very little cost involved, as the only tooling necessary would be printing fixtures and printing plates. This would give the line greater variety and help sales. In giving these locomotives new colors and names, they would appear as entirely new locomotives.

6. LIVEN UP THE BOX CAR - BRING IT OUT IN SEVERAL ROAD NAMES *O.K. 4 OR 5 NEW CARS* (wasn't done)  
Our box car line is very poor. Railroads today are using larger and more colorful printing on their cars; this would give greater variety to the line and promote sales of extra cars. This could also apply to the Hopper and Gondola Cars.

7. ADD TANK CARS TO MORE TRAINS. ~~CAN'T DO NOW~~ *ADDED TO K5204 W* (added to 315 K5 set)  
Since we are being paid by Gulf to use their name on the tank cars, we should take advantage of this and use it in more places. At the present time, the Tank Car is used in only one train, the No. 5106.



8. PUT THE RAILROAD NAMES BACK ON THE TENDERS. NO (wasn't done)

I have heard a great many comments on this subject, both pro and con, and I believe the locomotives would be more realistic if the railroad name were used in the correct place on the tender and a small American Flyer Herald used to identify the product. Our competition uses this system on most of the higher priced trains in their line.

9. CHECK THE PRICE ON THE NO. 719 DUMP CAR. ? (price changed to \$7.95)

At \$8.75 list, this car seems entirely too high; the No. 714 Log Car using same chassis and coil sells for only \$5.50, as does the No. 716 Dump Car, the car which the No. 719 replaces.

10. PROMOTE A CONTEST FOR THE BEST TRAIN LAYOUT PHOTOS AND PLANS. CHECK FARTHER (?)

Follow the same plan in the train line as in the toy lines, and advertise a contest, using train merchandise for prizes. The photos and plans received could be used in advertising, for future catalogs, etc.

11. PRINT THE SAME RAILROAD NAME ON THE CABOOSES THAT APPEARS ON THE LOCOMOTIVE & TENDER. ADD AMERICAN FLYER TO ALL TENDERS (AF put on caboose)

We now pack the Reading Caboose in trains using the N.Y.C., U.P., Pennsylvania, etc. locomotives and tenders; this is not true in real railroad practice. This change would make the trains more realistic.

12. ADD TRACK LOCKS TO EVERY TRAIN IN THE LINE. CHECK FIBER TRACK LOCK (was done)

This item is needed for better operation; if the original low cost train is bought for a child and proves troublesome, the chances are the customer will not enlarge the railroad, and the child will lose interest in the outfit. Therefore, everything possible should be done to make the first layout satisfactory, thus encouraging future sales through expansion of the train layout.

13. USE THE PIKE PLANNER AS A SALES PROMOTION ITEM. START AS SALES ITEM THEN USE AS PROMOTION (was done)

I am afraid that, as a sales item, very few of these will be bought, but, if used to promote sales, the item will result in greater demand for additional track, switches, etc., which was the original intention when the item was designed.

14. ADD AMERICAN FLYER AND A.C. GILBERT NAMES TO ALL SHIPPING CARTONS. YES (was added)

Printing the cartons will add very little expense, if any, to the carton cost, but will bring the name and advertising to many people. This is good low-cost advertising and should be taken advantage of.

15. ADD THE NO. 13 CIRCUIT BREAKER TO THE LINE. ADD FOR 1952 (was added)

This item was created so the users of the #1 and #2 Transformers could have protection against burn-outs, as these transformers are not equipped with any type circuit breaker. This item is drawn up and uses no new tools, but was not added to the line.

16. PACKAGE SOME OF OUR TRAINS WITH THE NO. 566 BILLBOARD WHISTLE. PENDING (was done in 1955)

I feel that a great many people would rather have the whistle tone as produced by the Billboard Whistle in preference to the Air Chime Whistle, and, by doing this, we would make it possible for the public to purchase a whistle train with a real steam whistle tone.



# 1963 Cost of AF items

Actual Gilbert cost analysis figures

YEAR 1963

PRELIMINARY B/M COST ESTIMATE  
FINAL B/M COST ESTIMATE

A. C. GILBERT, JR. S. H. FRANZ  
W. J. REUSCHER E. COLE  
G. F. SCHUMACHER F. STOCKWELL  
B. GOLDBECK J. BROOME  
E. J. STANFORD H. FITZPATRICK  
W. L. QUINNAN, JR. M. CRISCUOLO

PRODUCT 21920 H.P. "A" Unit Loco (1 Motor) DATE 3-28-63

ASSEMBLY NO. 71-171114-2 P/L DATE 8-7-62 REV.

| BREAKDOWN OF COST ESTIMATE | MATERIAL | LABOR | OVERHEAD | TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION | FACTORY COST |
|----------------------------|----------|-------|----------|-------------------------|--------------|
| CONTENTS OF SET            | .98      | 1.31  | 3.12     |                         | 5.41         |
| ADVERTISING                |          |       |          |                         |              |
| PACKING MATERIAL & LABOR   | .25      | .04   | .08      |                         | .37          |
| FINAL ASSEMBLY             |          |       |          |                         |              |
| TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION    |          |       |          | .38                     | .38          |
| TOTAL FACTORY COST         | 1.23     | 1.35  | 3.20     | .38                     | 6.16         |

|                                   | PER UNIT FOR SEP. SALES 19 63 | PER UNIT FOR SEP. SALES 19 | NOTES                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| MATERIAL                          | 1.23                          |                            | ESTIMATE BASED ON:        |
| LABOR                             | 1.35                          |                            |                           |
| MATERIAL & LABOR                  | 2.58                          |                            |                           |
| OVERHEAD                          | 3.20                          |                            |                           |
| TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION           | .38                           |                            | YEARLY PRODUCTION         |
| TOTAL FACTORY COST                | 6.16                          |                            |                           |
| 12.96 % ADMINISTRATIVE EXP.       | .80                           |                            | PACKED PER SHIP. CARTON 1 |
| % ROYALTY (BASIS-JOBBER PRICE)    | -                             |                            |                           |
| 12.76 % SELLING EXPENSE           | .79                           |                            |                           |
| 30.71 % T.V. ADVERTISING of Labor | .48                           |                            |                           |
| .95 % PERSONNEL EXP.              | .06                           |                            |                           |
| 4.46 % ENGINEERING EXP.           | .27                           |                            |                           |
| 3.42 % CASH DISCOUNT              | .23                           |                            |                           |
| .50 % PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT         | .03                           |                            |                           |
| TOTAL COST                        | 8.80                          |                            |                           |
| MARK UP 15 %                      | 1.32                          |                            |                           |
| SUGGESTED JOBBER PRICE            | 10.12                         | 8 10.61                    |                           |
| ACTUAL PRICE TO JOBBER            | 11.50                         |                            |                           |
| SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE            | 22.00                         |                            |                           |
| AGREED ACTUAL RETAIL PRICE        |                               |                            |                           |

YEAR 19 63

PRELIMINARY B/M COST ESTIMATE  
FINAL B/M COST ESTIMATE

A. C. GILBERT, JR. S. H. FRANZ  
W. J. REUSCHER E. COLE  
G. F. SCHUMACHER F. STOCKWELL  
B. GOLDBECK J. BROOME  
E. J. STANFORD H. FITZPATRICK  
W. L. QUINNAN, JR. M. CRISCUOLO

PRODUCT 21677 Jet Engine Transport DATE 3-19-63

ASSEMBLY NO. 71 162942 P/L DATE 8-8-62 REV.

| BREAKDOWN OF COST ESTIMATE | MATERIAL | LABOR | OVERHEAD | TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION | FACTORY COST |
|----------------------------|----------|-------|----------|-------------------------|--------------|
| CONTENTS OF SET            | .08      | .09   | .23      |                         | .40          |
| ADVERTISING                |          |       |          |                         |              |
| PACKING MATERIAL & LABOR   | .17      | .03   | .07      |                         | .27          |
| FINAL ASSEMBLY             |          |       |          |                         |              |
| TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION    |          |       |          | .04                     | .04          |
| TOTAL FACTORY COST         | .25      | .12   | .30      | .04                     | .71          |

|                                | PER UNIT FOR SEP. SALES 19 63 | PER UNIT FOR SEP. SALES 19 | NOTES                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| MATERIAL                       | .25                           |                            | ESTIMATE BASED ON:        |
| LABOR                          | .12                           |                            |                           |
| MATERIAL & LABOR               | .37                           |                            |                           |
| OVERHEAD                       | .30                           |                            |                           |
| TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION        | .04                           |                            | YEARLY PRODUCTION         |
| TOTAL FACTORY COST             | .71                           |                            |                           |
| 12.96 % ADMINISTRATIVE EXP.    | .09                           |                            | PACKED PER SHIP. CARTON 4 |
| % ROYALTY (BASIS-JOBBER PRICE) | -                             |                            |                           |
| 12.76 % SELLING EXPENSE        | .09                           |                            |                           |
| 35.71 % T.V. ADVERTISING       | .04                           |                            |                           |
| .95 % PERSONNEL EXP.           | .03                           |                            |                           |
| 4.46 % ENGINEERING EXP.        | .03                           |                            |                           |
| 3.42 % CASH DISCOUNT           | .02                           |                            |                           |
| .50 % PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT      | .01                           |                            |                           |
| TOTAL COST                     | 1.00                          |                            |                           |
| MARK UP 15 %                   | .15                           |                            |                           |
| SUGGESTED JOBBER PRICE         | 1.15                          |                            |                           |
| ACTUAL PRICE TO JOBBER         | .95                           |                            |                           |
| SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE         | 2.30                          |                            |                           |
| AGREED ACTUAL RETAIL PRICE     |                               |                            |                           |

YEAR 19 63

PRELIMINARY B/M COST ESTIMATE  
FINAL B/M COST ESTIMATE

A. C. GILBERT, JR. S. H. FRANZ  
W. J. REUSCHER E. COLE  
G. F. SCHUMACHER F. STOCKWELL  
B. GOLDBECK J. BROOME  
E. J. STANFORD H. FITZPATRICK  
W. L. QUINNAN, JR. M. CRISCUOLO

PRODUCT 20800 Game Train DATE 4-11-63

ASSEMBLY NO. 71 171249 P/L DATE 1-18-63 REV. 3-28-63

| BREAKDOWN OF COST ESTIMATE | MATERIAL | LABOR | OVERHEAD | TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION | FACTORY COST |
|----------------------------|----------|-------|----------|-------------------------|--------------|
| CONTENTS OF SET            | 2.06     | .98   | 2.32     |                         | 5.36         |
| ADVERTISING                |          |       |          |                         |              |
| PACKING MATERIAL & LABOR   | .42      | .09   | .19      |                         | .70          |
| FINAL ASSEMBLY             |          |       |          |                         |              |
| TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION    |          |       |          | .30                     | .30          |
| TOTAL FACTORY COST         | 2.48     | 1.07  | 2.51     | .30                     | 6.36         |

|                                | PER UNIT FOR SEP. SALES 19 63 | PER UNIT FOR SEP. SALES 19 | NOTES                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| MATERIAL                       | 2.48                          |                            | ESTIMATE BASED ON:        |
| LABOR                          | 1.07                          |                            |                           |
| MATERIAL & LABOR               | 3.55                          |                            |                           |
| OVERHEAD                       | 2.51                          |                            |                           |
| TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION        | .30                           |                            | YEARLY PRODUCTION         |
| TOTAL FACTORY COST             | 6.36                          |                            |                           |
| 12.96 % ADMINISTRATIVE EXP.    | .82                           |                            | PACKED PER SHIP. CARTON 6 |
| % ROYALTY (BASIS-JOBBER PRICE) | -                             |                            |                           |
| 12.76 % SELLING EXPENSE        | .81                           |                            |                           |
| 35.71 % T.V. ADVERTISING       | .38                           |                            |                           |
| .95 % PERSONNEL EXP.           | .06                           |                            |                           |
| 4.46 % ENGINEERING EXP.        | .28                           |                            |                           |
| 3.42 % CASH DISCOUNT           | .22                           |                            |                           |
| .50 % PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT      | .03                           |                            |                           |
| TOTAL COST                     | 8.96                          |                            |                           |
| MARK UP 15 %                   | 1.34                          |                            |                           |
| SUGGESTED JOBBER PRICE         | 10.30                         | 8 10.53                    |                           |
| ACTUAL PRICE TO JOBBER         | 10.00                         |                            |                           |
| SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE         | 22.32                         |                            |                           |
| AGREED ACTUAL RETAIL PRICE     |                               |                            |                           |

YEAR 19 63

PRELIMINARY B/M COST ESTIMATE  
FINAL B/M COST ESTIMATE

A. C. GILBERT, JR. S. H. FRANZ  
W. J. REUSCHER E. COLE  
G. F. SCHUMACHER F. STOCKWELL  
B. GOLDBECK J. BROOME  
E. J. STANFORD H. FITZPATRICK  
W. L. QUINNAN, JR. M. CRISCUOLO

PRODUCT 24222 Domino Covered Hopper DATE 3-7-63

ASSEMBLY NO. 71 1711212 P/L DATE 9-17-62 REV.

| BREAKDOWN OF COST ESTIMATE | MATERIAL | LABOR | OVERHEAD | TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION | FACTORY COST |
|----------------------------|----------|-------|----------|-------------------------|--------------|
| CONTENTS OF SET            | .10      | .09   | .24      |                         | .43          |
| ADVERTISING                |          |       |          |                         |              |
| PACKING MATERIAL & LABOR   | .13      | .02   | .04      |                         | .19          |
| FINAL ASSEMBLY             |          |       |          |                         |              |
| TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION    |          |       |          | .03                     | .03          |
| TOTAL FACTORY COST         | .23      | .11   | .28      | .03                     | .65          |

|                                | PER UNIT FOR SEP. SALES 19 63 | PER UNIT FOR SEP. SALES 19 | NOTES                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| MATERIAL                       | .23                           |                            | ESTIMATE BASED ON:        |
| LABOR                          | .11                           |                            |                           |
| MATERIAL & LABOR               | .34                           |                            |                           |
| OVERHEAD                       | .28                           |                            |                           |
| TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION        | .03                           |                            | YEARLY PRODUCTION         |
| TOTAL FACTORY COST             | .65                           |                            |                           |
| 12.96 % ADMINISTRATIVE EXP.    | .08                           |                            | PACKED PER SHIP. CARTON 4 |
| % ROYALTY (BASIS-JOBBER PRICE) | -                             |                            |                           |
| 12.76 % SELLING EXPENSE        | .08                           |                            |                           |
| 35.71 % T.V. ADVERTISING Labor | .04                           |                            |                           |
| .95 % PERSONNEL EXP.           | .01                           |                            |                           |
| 4.46 % ENGINEERING EXP.        | .03                           |                            |                           |
| 3.42 % CASH DISCOUNT           | .02                           |                            |                           |
| .50 % PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT      | .01                           |                            |                           |
| TOTAL COST                     | .92                           |                            |                           |
| MARK UP 15 %                   | .14                           |                            |                           |
| SUGGESTED JOBBER PRICE         | 1.06                          |                            |                           |
| ACTUAL PRICE TO JOBBER         | 1.61                          |                            |                           |
| SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE         | 2.30                          |                            |                           |
| AGREED ACTUAL RETAIL PRICE     |                               |                            |                           |



PRODUCT 26760 Pair - Remote Control Switches

ASSEMBLY NO. ZA-15N361

DATE 3-18-63

|                                  | PER UNIT FOR<br>SEP. SALES 19 63 | PER UNIT FOR<br>SEP. SALES 19 | NOTES                   |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. MATERIAL                      | 3.43                             |                               | ESTIMATE BASED ON:      |
| LABOR                            | 1.27                             |                               |                         |
| MATERIAL & LABOR                 | 2.69                             |                               |                         |
| OVERHEAD                         | 2.88                             |                               |                         |
| TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION          | .36                              |                               | YEARLY PRODUCTION       |
| TOTAL FACTORY COST               | 5.92                             |                               |                         |
| 32.96% ADMINISTRATIVE EXP.       | .77                              |                               | PACKED PER SHIP. CARTON |
| % ROYALTY (BASS-JOBBER PRICE)    | —                                |                               |                         |
| 32.76% SELLING EXPENSE           | .76                              |                               |                         |
| 35.73% T.V. ADVERTISING of Labor | .65                              |                               |                         |
| .95% PERSONNEL EXP.              | .06                              |                               |                         |
| 1.16% ENGINEERING EXP.           | .26                              |                               |                         |
| 3.12% CASH DISCOUNT              | .20                              |                               |                         |
| .50% PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT         | .03                              |                               |                         |
| TOTAL COST                       | 8.15                             |                               |                         |
| MARK UP 35%                      | 3.27                             |                               |                         |
| SUGGESTED JOBBER PRICE           | 9.72                             |                               |                         |
| 1. TUAL PRICE TO JOBBER          | 8.28                             |                               |                         |
| SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE           | 23.33                            |                               |                         |
| AGREED ACTUAL RETAIL PRICE       |                                  |                               |                         |

PRODUCT 25082 Action Box Cox M.H.

ASSEMBLY NO. XA16N2812

DATE 4-24-63

|                                 | PER UNIT FOR<br>SEV. SALES 19 | PER UNIT FOR<br>SEV. SALES 19 | NOTES                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. MATERIAL                     | .22                           |                               | ESTIMATE BASED ON:        |
| LABOR                           | .25                           |                               |                           |
| MATERIAL & LABOR                | .47                           |                               |                           |
| OVERHEAD                        | .59                           |                               | YEARLY PRODUCTION         |
| TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION         | .07                           |                               |                           |
| TOTAL FACTORY COST              | 1.13                          |                               |                           |
| 12.96 % ADMINISTRATIVE EXP.     | .15                           |                               | PACKED PER SHIP. CARTON 4 |
| - % ROYALTY (BASS-JOBBER PRICE) | -                             |                               |                           |
| 12.76 % SELLING EXPENSE         | .16                           |                               |                           |
| 35.71 % T.V. ADVERTISING        | .09                           |                               |                           |
| .95 % PERSONNEL EXP.            | .01                           |                               |                           |
| 4.46 % ENGINEERING EXP.         | .03                           |                               |                           |
| 3.62 % CASH DISCOUNT            | .06                           |                               |                           |
| .50 % PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT       | .01                           |                               |                           |
| TOTAL COST                      | 1.62                          |                               |                           |
| MARK UP 15 %                    | .24                           |                               |                           |
| SUGGESTED JOBBER PRICE          | 1.86                          |                               |                           |
| 2. ALL PRICE TO JOBBER          | 2.30                          |                               |                           |
| SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE          | 4.06                          |                               |                           |
| AGREED ACTUAL RETAIL PRICE      |                               |                               |                           |

PRODUCT Gondola 1963

DATE 4-5-63

|                               | PER UNIT FOR<br>SEP. SALES 19 | PER UNIT FOR<br>SEP. SALES 19 | NOTES                          |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ↓ RETAIL                      |                               |                               | <u>ESTIMATE BASED ON:</u>      |
| LABOR                         |                               |                               |                                |
| MATERIAL & LABOR              |                               |                               |                                |
| OVERHEAD                      |                               |                               | <u>YEARLY PRODUCTION</u>       |
| TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION       |                               |                               |                                |
| TOTAL FACTORY COST            |                               |                               |                                |
| % ADMINISTRATIVE EXP.         |                               |                               | <u>PACKED PER SHIP. CARTON</u> |
| % ROYALTY (BASS-JOBBER PRICE) |                               |                               |                                |
| % SELLING EXPENSE             |                               |                               |                                |
| % T.V. ADVERTISING            |                               |                               | <u>Loose for Set only.</u>     |
| % PERSONNEL EXP.              |                               |                               |                                |
| % ENGINEERING EXP.            |                               |                               |                                |
| % CASH DISCOUNT               |                               |                               |                                |
| % PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT         |                               |                               |                                |
| TOTAL COST                    |                               |                               |                                |
| MARK UP %                     |                               |                               |                                |
| SUGGESTED JOBBER PRICE        |                               |                               |                                |
| ↓ RETAIL PRICE TO JOBBER      |                               |                               |                                |
| SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE        |                               |                               |                                |
| AGREED ACTUAL RETAIL PRICE    |                               |                               |                                |

PRODUCT 26700 Straight Track

DATE 3-11-63

|                                   | PER UNIT FOR<br>SEP. SALES 1963 | PER UNIT FOR<br>SEP. SALES 19 | NOTES                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. RETAIL                         | .014                            |                               | ESTIMATE BASED ON:          |
| LABOR                             | .011                            |                               |                             |
| MATERIAL & LABOR                  | .025                            |                               |                             |
| OVERHEAD                          | .036                            |                               |                             |
| TOOL & DIE AMORTIZATION           | .003                            |                               | YEARLY PRODUCTION           |
| TOTAL FACTORY COST                | .064                            |                               |                             |
| 12.96 % ADMINISTRATIVE EXP.       | .008                            |                               | PACKED PER SHIP. CAPLOC! 48 |
| % ROYALTY (BASIS-JOBBER PRICE)    | -                               |                               |                             |
| 12.76 % SELLING EXPENSE           | .008                            |                               |                             |
| 35.71 % T.V. ADVERTISING of Labor | .004                            |                               |                             |
| .95 % PERSONNEL EXP.              | .001                            |                               |                             |
| 4.46 % ENGINEERING EXP.           | .003                            |                               |                             |
| 3.62 % CASH DISCOUNT              | .002                            |                               |                             |
| .50 % PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT         | .001                            |                               |                             |
| TOTAL COST                        | .091                            |                               |                             |
| MARK UP .15 %                     | .014                            |                               |                             |
| SUGGESTED JOBBER PRICE            | .105                            |                               |                             |
| 1. AL PRICE TO JOBBER             | .14                             |                               |                             |
| SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE            | .228                            |                               |                             |
| AGREED ACTUAL RETAIL PRICE        |                                 |                               |                             |



**TOP TEN ACCOUNTS OF 1962**  
**1963 vs. 1962**  
**EXPECTED SALES - \$1000's**  
**Based on Information From Ron Richards 4/15/63**

|                      |           | Toys | Race  | S   | HO  | Planes | Actual<br>Total<br>1962 | Est.<br>Total<br>1963 |
|----------------------|-----------|------|-------|-----|-----|--------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. John Plain        | -1962     | 42   | 31    | 6.7 | 0.3 | 1.1    | 81                      |                       |
|                      | Est. 1963 | 80   | 40-50 |     |     |        |                         | 130                   |
| 2. Western Auto      | 1962      | 239  | 144   | 1   | -   | -      | 384                     |                       |
|                      | 1963*     |      | 200   |     |     |        |                         | 425                   |
| 3. A.M.C.            | -1962     | 140  | 170   | 3.2 | -   | -      | 313                     |                       |
|                      | 1963**    |      |       | 3   |     |        |                         | 475                   |
| 4. R.H. Macy         | -1962     | 46   | 10    | 24  | 4.4 | 0.2    | 85                      |                       |
|                      | 1963      |      |       |     |     |        |                         | 140                   |
| 5. Pittsburgh Wh.    | -1962     | 54   | 24    | 1.8 | 2.9 | 0.8    | 84                      |                       |
|                      | 1963      |      |       |     |     |        |                         | 105                   |
| 6. Lash Distrib.     | -1962     | 40   | 10    | 13  | 15  | 2      | 80                      |                       |
|                      | 1963      |      |       |     |     |        |                         | 100                   |
| 7. Gen. Mchdse.***   | -1962     | 42   | 40    | 13  | 11  | 1      | 125                     |                       |
|                      | 1963      |      |       |     |     |        |                         | 260                   |
| 8. Sears****         | -1962     | 385  | 0     | 0   |     |        | 385                     |                       |
|                      | 1963      | 500  |       |     |     |        |                         | 775                   |
| 9. Montgomery Ward   | -1962     | 113  | 11    | 6.5 | 5.2 |        | 135                     |                       |
|                      | 1963      |      |       |     |     |        |                         | 500                   |
| 10. Goodyear Tire    | -1962     | 15   | 43    | 15  | 3   | 0.7    | 77                      |                       |
|                      | 1963      |      |       |     |     |        |                         | 90                    |
| Total, rounded off — |           |      |       |     |     |        | 1750                    | 3000                  |

Increase - about 71% including Sears and Ward.

about 40% excluding Sears and Ward.

\* Excludes lot of close-outs sold them. Tugger sales expected (already made?) to be \$20-\$25,000.

\*\* Science should increase 20%, erector 10%, race 25%. Total includes about \$100,000 for new 1963 lines (guess-A.H.).

\*\*\* Total for 1963, including J.C. Penny who has purchased Gen. Mchdse., will be \$250-\$275,000 vs. 1962's \$107,000 G.M. plus \$18,000 J.C.P.

\*\*\*\* Add \$100,000 this year for science; \$200,000 for Dinkey. Will buy hockey, Wing Thing, perhaps Scrabble and Tugger.



## Old-Products Sales

1. Medians, excluding extremes, with some judgment exercised in including only orders which show internal statistical consistency and which appear to be reasonably completely filled in in terms of what makes sense, indicates for old-products:

For 1962 Customers Continuing In 1963

|                                              | <b>1963 Equals<br/>1962 Plus<br/>Or Minus</b> |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| (a) Erector                                  | Plus 10%                                      |
| (b) Science                                  | Plus 20%                                      |
| (c) American Flyer                           | 0%                                            |
| (1) (Add Game Train - 20% of American Flyer) |                                               |
| (d) HO Train                                 | Minus 17%                                     |
| (e) Race Games                               | Plus 33%                                      |
| (f) Airplanes                                | Minus 2/3 (67%)                               |

|                | <b>\$ Millions</b>    |                        |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|                | <b>1962<br/>Sales</b> | <b>1963<br/>Sales*</b> |
| Erector        | 2.90                  | 3.2                    |
| Science        | 3.10                  | 3.7                    |
| American Flyer | 1.46                  | 1.5                    |
| Game Train     |                       | 0.3                    |
| HO Train       | 0.53                  | 0.4                    |
| Race Games     | 2.75                  | 3.7                    |
| Airplanes      | 0.33                  | 0.2                    |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>11.07</b>          | <b>13.0</b>            |

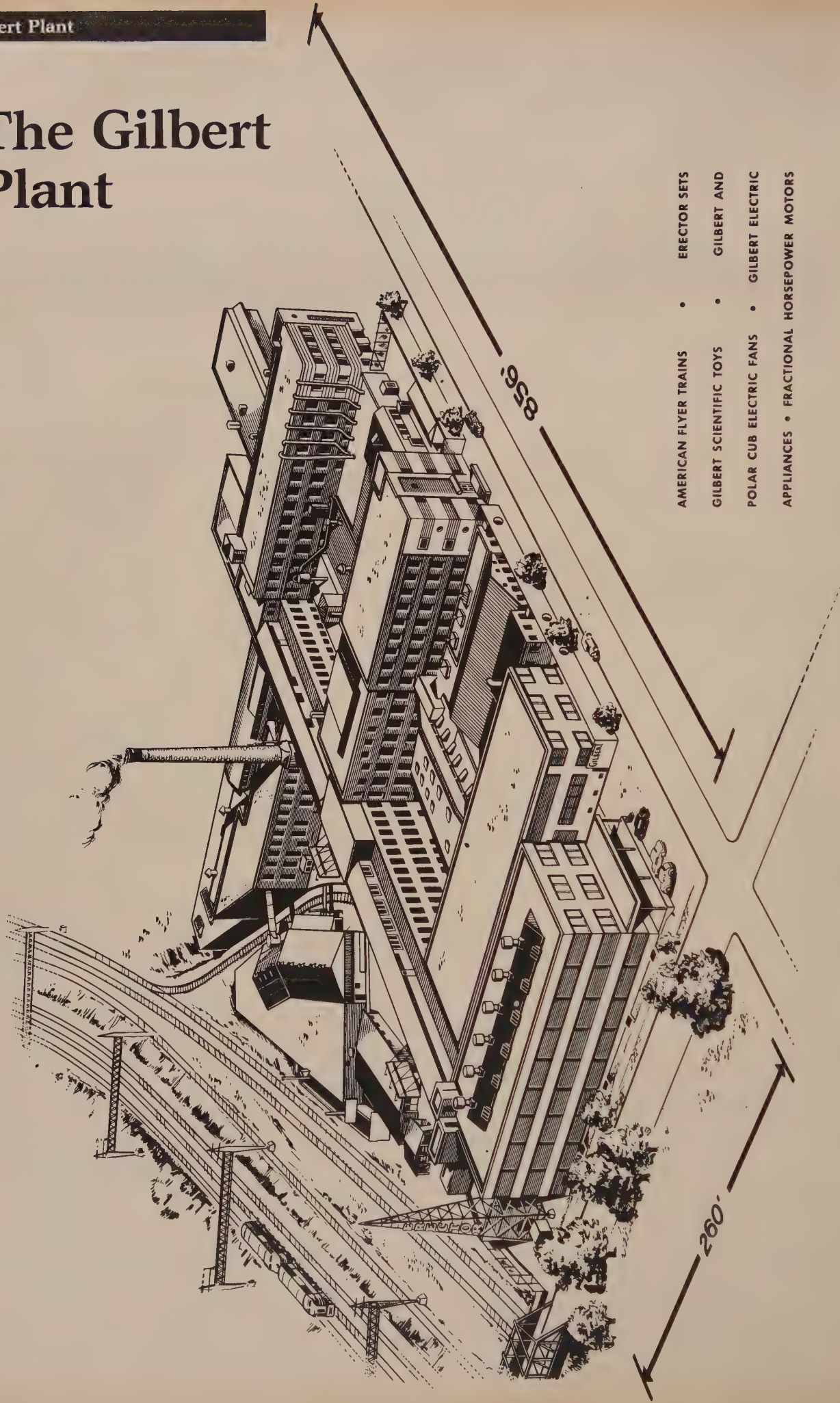
\*Not included are sales of close-outs already sold.

Close-outs volume in 1963 exceeded close-outs volume for 1962 by about \$400-500 thousand. (See page B-26).



# The Gilbert Plant

THE A. C. GILBERT COMPANY • FACTORY AND MAIN OFFICES: ERECTOR SQUARE, NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT



AMERICAN FLYER TRAINS • ERECTOR SETS  
 GILBERT SCIENTIFIC TOYS • GILBERT AND  
 POLAR CUB ELECTRIC FANS • GILBERT ELECTRIC  
 APPLIANCES • FRACTIONAL HORSEPOWER MOTORS

The A. C. Gilbert Company, Erector Square, New Haven, Conn.

Printed in the U. S. A.



# Main plant—ground floor

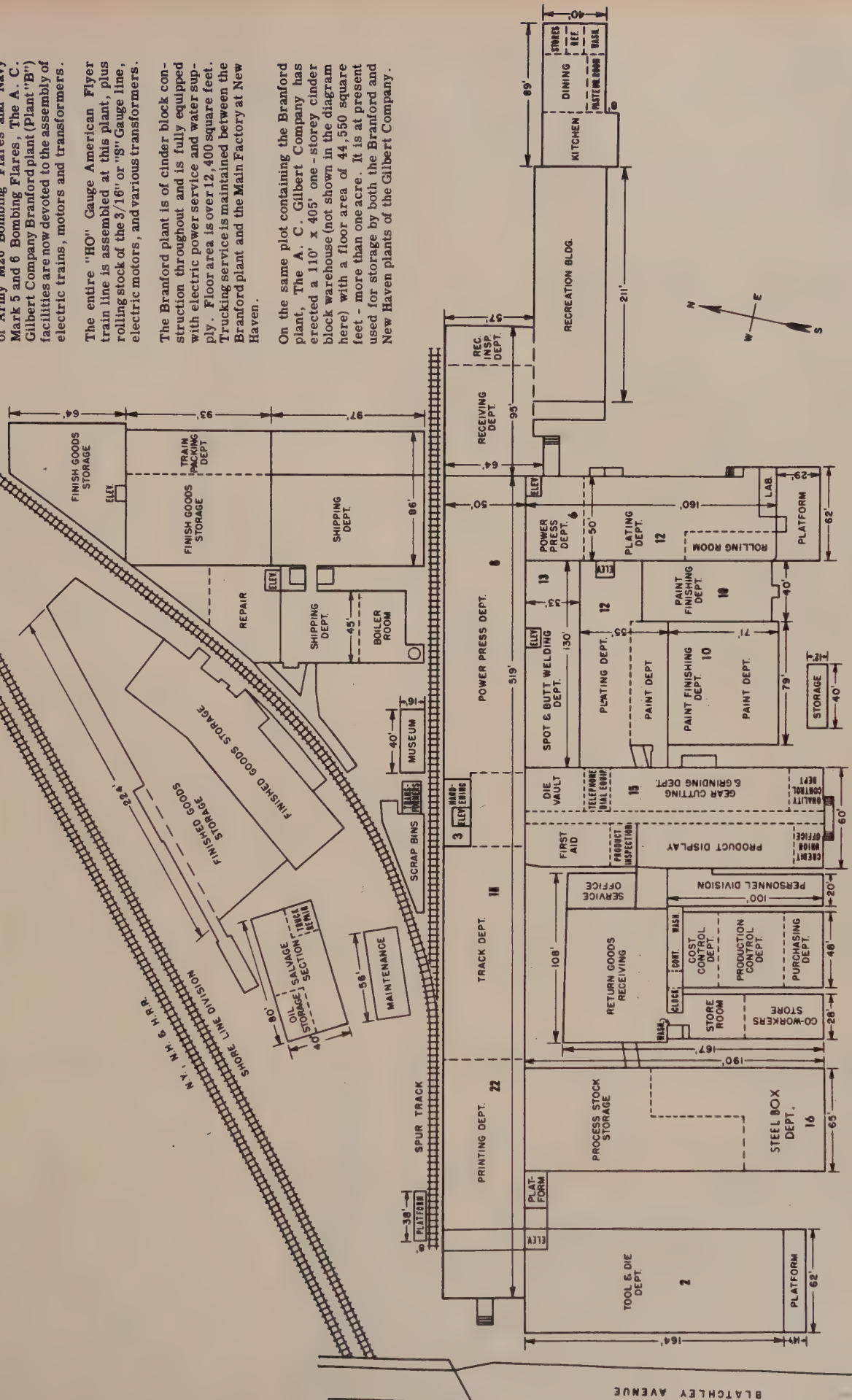
## BRANFORD PLANT

Built in 1942, primarily for the assembly of Army M26 Bombing Flares and Navy Mark 5 and 6 Bombing Flares, The A. C. Gilbert Company Branford plant (Plant "B") facilities are now devoted to the assembly of electric trains, motors and transformers.

The entire "HO" Gauge American Flyer train line is assembled at this plant, plus rolling stock of the 3/16" or "G" Gauge line, electric motors, and various transformers.

The Branford plant is of cinder block construction throughout and is fully equipped with electric power service and water supply. Floor area is over 12,400 square feet. Trucking service is maintained between the Branford plant and the Main Factory at New Haven.

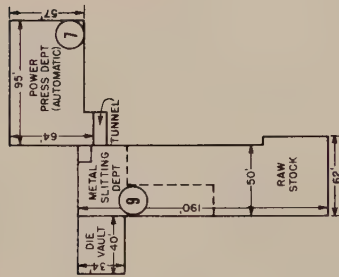
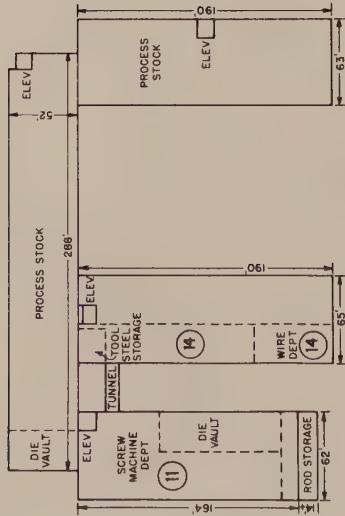
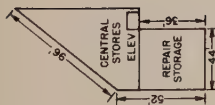
On the same plot containing the Branford plant, The A. C. Gilbert Company has erected a 110' x 405' one - storey cinder block warehouse (not shown in the diagram here) with a floor area of 44,550 square feet - more than one acre. It is at present used for storage by both the Branford and New Haven plants of the Gilbert Company.



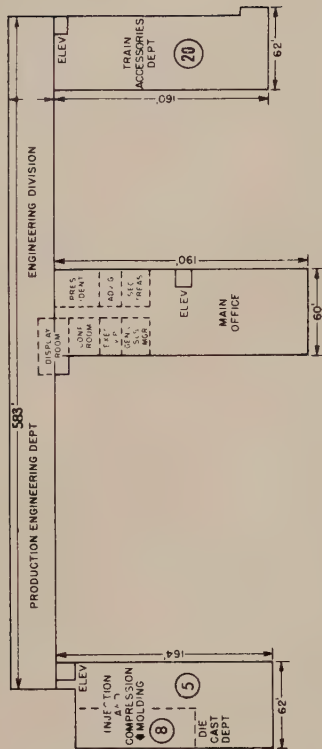
PECK STREET



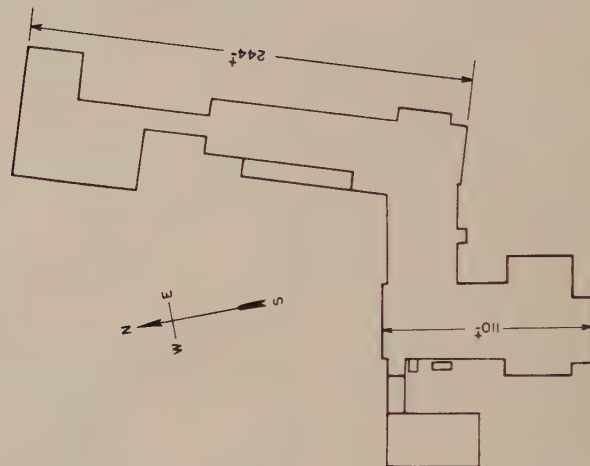
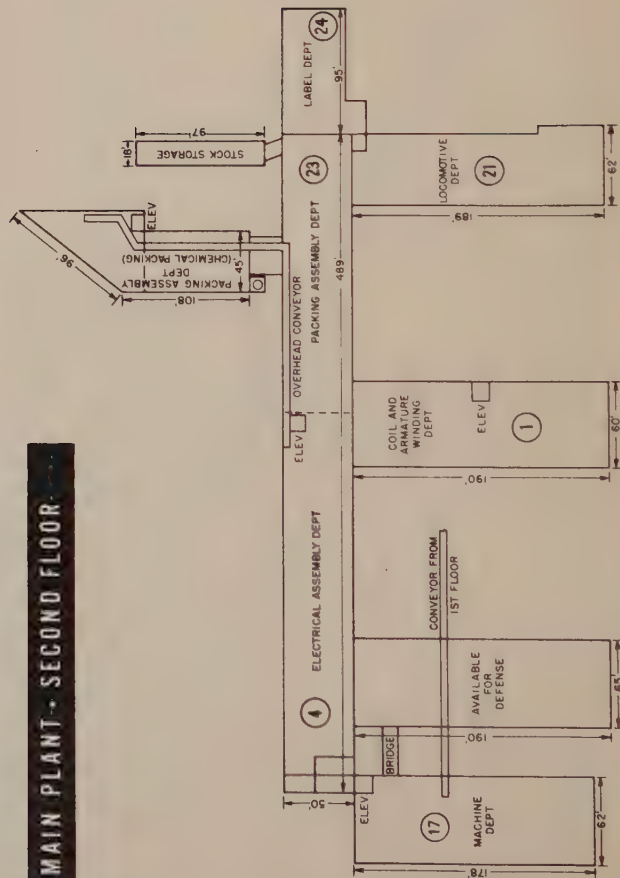
# MAIN PLANT - BASEMENT



# MAIN PLANT - THIRD FLOOR



# MAIN PLANT - SECOND FLOOR







**SPACE  
FOR  
LEASE**

## **in New Haven, Connecticut The Gateway to New England**

**Industrial Complex** 356,000 square feet of  
manufacturing and/or warehouse space, together with  
100,000 sq. foot modern warehouse on railroad siding.

When the Gilbert plant went up for lease, this promotional brochure was made showing the overall view of the plant. *Photo from collection of C.R. Konkel*

**RIGHT.** The Gilbert plant had ideal facilities for shipping and receiving: the main line of the New Haven Railroad ran right outside its doors. At left is the catenary of the NH electric lines; at right is the plant with a Southern Railway box car spotted in the siding.





# War work at Gilbert

*In Step With America's "Will to Win"*



Three times in its career, the A.C. Gilbert Co. made its facilities available for war work. In World War I, the Gilbert Company devoted 90% of its production facilities to war work. Included in the list of materials manufactured were the Colt automatic pistol, Browning machine gun magazine, parts for the gas defense propaganda distributors and a number of gas mask parts.

As early as 1940 the company had seen the possibility of being drawn into conflict. In a meeting on August 18, 1941, the management met to discuss their continuing plans to obtain defense work. This work has to be obtained under two operating premises: 1.) They would endeavor to get 40% of their capacity in defense work, which was to be \$2 million worth of government work 2.) Government work was to have the "right of way" at all times. They were to "prefer drills, fans and motor-driven items." The events of December 7, 1941 were to alter their plans.

The 1941 season was pretty much business as usual. Complete lines of toys and trains were available. In 1942, an "updated" version of the new 1941 catalog was issued, but most of the items were only leftovers from 1941. No trains were offered for sale in the years 1943, 1944 and 1945.

Gilbert produced many items for the war effort—too many to list. Many were entirely Gilbert designed and others were designed in collaboration with the branches of the military services. Gilbert engineers and production experts received widespread recognition for their achievements in producing most of the land and underwater fuses and actuating devices used during World War II.

## GILBERT HONORED

The Gilbert Company was awarded the Army-Navy "E" three times. With the first of these, in 1943, they published the *A.C. Gilbert War Book—In Step with America's 'Will to Win'*. The book contains many photographs of Gilbert's wartime production lines, equipment, military liaison personnel, Gilbert milestone events and complete coverage of the "E" award presentation.

1950 saw the possibility of the need for more defense work, and Gilbert published a handbook titled *Ready Again at Gilbert's*. This 36-page booklet is of interest of American Flyer buffs because it provides a listing of every piece of production equipment used by the Gilbert company. The book is a complete profile of the Gilbert organization, and it was to be used to secure defense contracts.

The section on personnel is titled, "Why people like to work at Gilbert's" and lists information on job selection, wages, security, training, health and safety. "So successfully has this policy been carried out that, in its 41 year history, the A.C. Gilbert Company has never had labor trouble or a labor disturbance of any kind. People who come to Gilbert's stay at Gilbert's."

Floor plans of all facilities are included in the book with dimensional data for each room on each floor labeled with the current use of that room. Using this data, someone could make beautiful scale model of the main plant, although an S scale model would measure 4 feet by more than 13 feet. In addition, each room's diagram showing where each piece of equipment is placed with a brief description of the piece of equipment, including its name and capabilities. Offices, stairways, washrooms, storage areas, elevators, access doors and conveyors are shown drawn to scale. Some photographs show equipment in operation. The Lester-Phoenix 12-ounce injection moulding machine shows a tableful of white Alco PA bodies next to it. The American fusion model LD-12 spot welder—9 K.V.A. shows a bin full of electronic whistle boxes improperly labeled as rectifier cases. A sign in the gear department says "Pride of Performance is the Root of Real Quality". Gilbert made its own armature, transformer and stator winding machines. There were 34 armature winding machines. At one time, Gilbert was the world's largest manufacturer of fractional horsepower motors. Everything is listed—right down to the Kenmore Household Type Electric Stove.

Seven modelmakers worked for a chief modelmaker, who reported to the director of engineering, who reported to the executive vice president in charge of the engineering division. He reported to A.C., and that is where the buck stopped.

Gilbert took pride in what he had built, and in what he was able to do for the war effort. "I am proud of our record in the war," he said. "We played a small but vital part in it—big for our kind of business. We worked hard and thought hard, all of us from the top to the bottom of the company. We could not have done the job any other way."





**TODAY**  
PUT YOUR  
MONEY IN  
WAR STAMPS

Because Uncle Sam needs a stamp for war American  
Flyer is putting stamps in the bottom of every  
full size Erector set & American Flyer train. Put  
them in the special envelope and make a  
FOR AN AMERICAN FLYER TRAIN

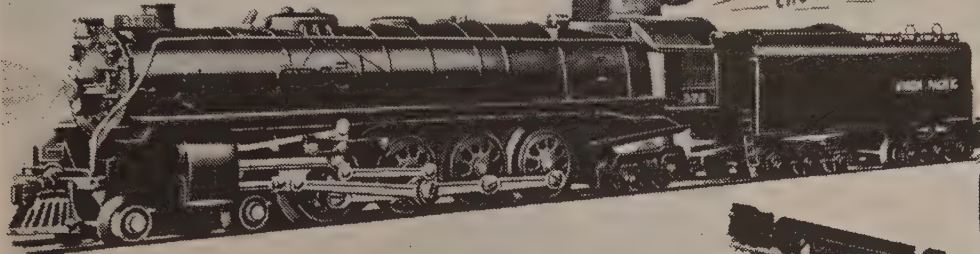
Tomorrow

OWN AN AMERICAN FLYER HOTSHOT  
and all this spectacular action equipment

LISTEN TO THAT "CHOO-CHOO"

See what a steady surge of power that  
worm drive locomotive gives

Only American Flyer brings you these  
super-realistic, super-thrilling features



THE new American Flyer Trains (so ready after  
the war) are the greatest marvels of precision and  
are ever known in electric railroading.

They not only look just like real but they also sound  
like real. The marvelous American Flyer built-in  
"choo-choo" accurately reproduces the tempestuous  
blast of a giant locomotive under full steam. So distinct  
is choo-choos that they can be heard at distances of  
100 feet. Most exciting of all, they change tone and  
go with every change in train speed. Deep-throated,  
stent choo-choos when your train is standing still...  
faster choo-choos as it picks up speed... roaring  
choo-choos when you open the throttle wide.

PRECISION CONTROL AT 1 TO 120  
SCALE MILES PER HOUR

The scientifically designed worm drive with which every  
American Flyer locomotive is equipped enables you to  
operate your train like a true engineer. It banishes jerky  
"jack rabbit" pull. You can nose your train out of the  
station and maintain slow speeds without danger of stall-  
ing. You get a steady surge of power at high speeds, and  
120 scale miles per hour are easily possible. At all speeds  
worm drive is amazingly quiet.

THE A. C. GILBERT COMPANY, NEW HAVEN, CONN.



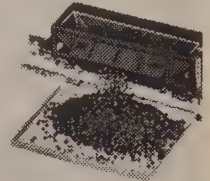
FLASHING  
SEMAPHORE

Arm shifts automati-  
cally. Shows red light  
to stop train; green  
light to go. Prevents  
collisions by train up  
station on single track.



ARMY UNLOADING CAR

Press remote control button and auto-  
matically car platform swings 90° and  
shows the armor of war down the incline.



COAL DUMP CAR

Side of car opens and automatically dis-  
charges load of coal into bin the moment you  
press remote control button.

ELECTROMATIC  
CRANE

Grabs up load of steel  
by electric magnetic  
power - swings it over  
car and unloads in car.  
All movements directed  
by remote control.



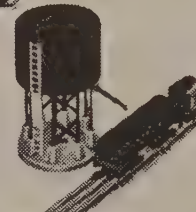
REALISTIC  
TRACK GANG SET

Flagman automatically moves forward  
men stop work when train approach  
When train has passed, flagman  
back and men resume work.



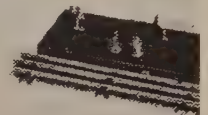
MAIL PICK-UP CAR

Press a remote control button and  
while train is in motion - car auto-  
matically grabs one sack of mail and  
tosses out a second sack.



REALISTIC WATER TANK

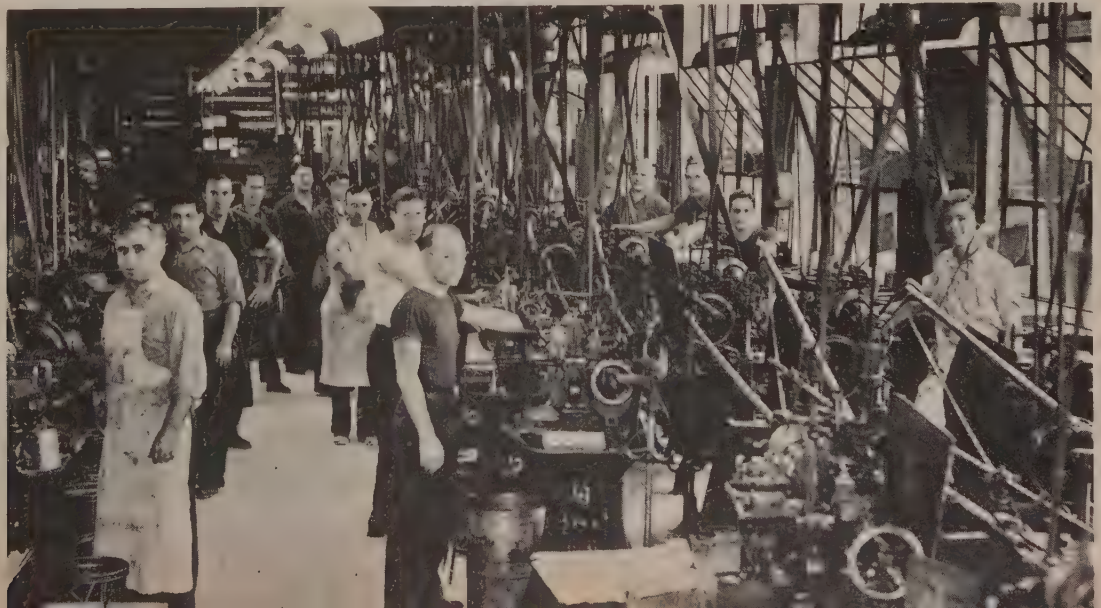
Water sprout raises and lowers when you  
press remote control button. Built to  
scale and realistic in appearance. Avis-  
tion beacon on top.



Just as Gilbert's manufacturing facilities were converted to war, so also was Gilbert national advertising converted to featuring timely war messages. The advertising on Erector, American Flyer trains and other toys which could not be produced under war conditions, urged boys to buy War Stamps...and to ask their parents to give them War Stamps for Christmas.

Such advertising served two important purposes. It helped the Government get in more money to pay for the war, and it built future demand and future buying power for toys "Developed at the Gilbert Hall of Science," thereby helping to stabilize employment when the time came for the A.C. Gilbert Company to make the transition to peacetime products.

The Screw Machine Department at Gilbert played an important role during the war. Exceptionally heavy burdens were placed on the people and the machines, and every week brought new changes to operating procedures to speed up production.







1909



1912-1915

TOP. The year is 1909 and A.C. just graduated from Yale and decided to make boxed magic trick sets in this rented barn in Westville, Connecticut, under the name of Mysto Manufacturing Company. A.C. designed, built, packed and sold the first sets himself.

LEFT. Main entrance to the world's largest toy plant opened in 1917 on a six-acre lot on Blatchley Avenue and Peck Streets.

BOTTOM. In peacetime the Locomotive Department—where famous AF trains were built—was a busy and important place, just as in this scene in that department from the war years.







Two hundred and fourteen members of the Gilbert family attended the annual service dinner on December 5, 1942 in the ballroom of the Taft Hotel. A.C. told of the time when his wife kept the books and A.L. Richmond was a salesman, purchasing agent and stock chaser; of the untiring efforts of brother "F.W."; and how Herman Trisch did everything for A.C. but breathe. Here, A.C. gets 30 year service pin.



The service department during the war years helped customers get the longest life from their Kitchen Kits, Gilbert fans and other appliances, instead of trains.

During the war, Gilbert's fleet of trucks brought raw materials to the plant night and day, and took finished products to the Army and Navy depots.





## A Personal Message to the Workers of The A. C. Gilbert Company

Hello Everybody! I am sure that all of you share my pride in the contributions The A. C. Gilbert Company is making to strengthen the hands of our fighting men. I know you are equally proud of the honor that has been accorded us in the award of the Army-Navy "E."

Your splendid record of attendance—your eagerness to learn new skills—your zeal in maintaining our high rate of production, all prove in the most emphatic way that you are in step with America's will to win.

As I reflect on those words "the will to win" my thoughts go back to the last Olympic Games in 1936, which I attended as Manager of the American Olympic Team. That, too, was an international contest, with fifty-three nations participating; and my most vivid recollection of it is the marvelous fighting spirit displayed by our American athletes.

Today we are engaged in an international contest of a far grimmer nature, and on a vastly larger scale. Curiously enough the last Olympic Games were held in Berlin, and the next were scheduled for Tokio—our two main objectives in this war. But victory this time is not a matter of mere prizes and honors. It is a question of conquering or being conquered. And already our men have shown that they can bring to the battlefields the same indomitable American spirit that they have demonstrated on the athletic field.

Now I realize that the part that you and I play in this war is less spectacular than that of our fighting men. We wear no uniforms. We win no war medals. We see no enemy forces give ground before our might. But we do know how important our job is, and no one realizes more than I do the many sacrifices that you are called upon to make.

We are joined together now in just one real aim—to come closer and closer to absolute perfection in the making of the war things we are asked to produce. Let us never have on our conscience the thought that Americans died, or failed, because they received too little too late.

As I go through the plant and see you, you represent to me that fine, patient, insistent skill of people who are experts at their jobs, and I am proud of you. We are all looking to the day when we will be back producing the things that make life sweeter, liberty more meaningful, the pursuit of happiness easier. I have every confidence that you will keep strong in your hearts the will to win, that you will do your utmost to maintain the fine record that you have thus far established.

*A.C. Gilbert*  
President

### THE BATTLE OF PRODUCTION

Until two years ago The A. C. Gilbert Company was devoted exclusively to the manufacture of electrical appliances, Erector sets, American Flyer trains, Gilbert Chemistry sets and other scientific toys developed at the Gilbert Hall of Science.

Then, early in 1941 came the Nation's call for vastly increased production of war materials. True, we were not yet at war, nor was The A. C. Gilbert Company directly obligated to undertake the manufacture of war supplies. Business on our regular lines was exceptionally good.

But with the war news distinctly unfavorable to what even then we considered "our side," with millions of young men being drawn into our Army and Navy, we considered it a simple duty to participate in America's defense program.

By the time our "defense program" had become a "war program," The A. C. Gilbert Company was heavily committed to the production of military and naval supplies. Soon after Pearl Harbor every machine and tool that could be converted was humming on war production. In addition, new plants have been acquired—a vast array of new high-speed precision equipment installed—and our army of skilled workers greatly enlarged.

Today The A. C. Gilbert Company is fully enlisted for war production and our rate of output is far in excess of both peacetime records and our most optimistic expectations.

In viewing the battle of production in retrospect, two things stand out. First is

the tremendous volume of supplies needed for modern warfare. Second is the precision with which they must be made.

In this connection it must be noted that we were undertaking to manufacture items entirely new to us. Our problems were infinitely more complex than those of the airplane manufacturer who is called upon to increase his output tenfold or the automobile manufacturer who converts to jeeps or half-tracks. Without belittling their difficulties or accomplishments, they at least are making products within their general range of experience.

While The A. C. Gilbert Company enjoyed no comparable advantage, we did have two priceless assets. First, because of the high precision standards we had developed for our electrical supplies and toys, most of our equipment was ideally suited for precision war materials.

Second and even more important, we had a corps of workers trained to precision practice, highly intelligent and quick to learn new methods. And their zeal has been fully equalled by their deep sense of patriotism and loyalty to the Company.

No war can be considered won until the last battle is fought. But the achievements of the workers of The A. C. Gilbert Company have already brought them their first laurels: the cherished Army-Navy "E." The winning of this award is inspiring evidence that their country can depend on them for every sacrifice and exertion until the United Nations wring an unconditional surrender from each Axis enemy.



# Gilbert newsclips

*End of the line for A.C. and his company*

## A. C. Gilbert, Famed Toy Inventor, Dies

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) — Alfred Carlton Gilbert, 76, famed toy inventor, industrialist and athlete, died Tuesday.

Mr. Gilbert, who had a heart ailment, died at the New England Baptist Hospital in Boston, where he had been a patient for several weeks.

He was chairman of the board of A. C. Gilbert Co., and had served as president of the company until 1954, when he was succeeded by his son, A. C. Gilbert Jr.

### Attended Yale University

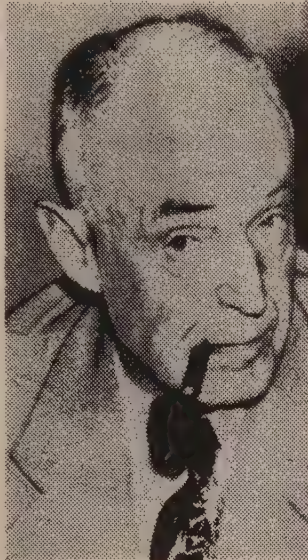
A boyhood hobby, magic, led him into the business that occupied most of his working life. He founded the Gilbert firm as a tiny enterprise making equipment for amateur magicians. From this grew the giant firm that turned out chemistry sets, microscopes, electric trains—and the world-famous Erector Set, the metal construction toy that was the keystone of the firm.

While a student at Yale University shortly after the turn of the century, Mr. Gilbert won the national intercollegiate wrestling and all-around gymnastic crowns. In 1908 he broke the then world's record for the pole vault with a leap of 12 feet 7¾ inches at the Olympic trials in Philadelphia. Later that year he tied for first place at the Olympic Games in London with a mark of 12 feet 2 inches.

### Started With Magic

It was typical of his thoroughness and desire to excel in whatever he undertook that he went through Yale Medical School, not to practice medicine, but because he wanted to be a coach and regarded medical training as valuable in that field.

But when he was graduated



ALFRED C. GILBERT

from the medical school in 1909, and his father asked, "What are you going to do now, son?" young Gilbert's reply was: "I am ready for business."

The new doctor led his father to a woodworking shop fitted up for the manufacture of various trick and magic appliances.

Some time later the idea of the Erector Set came to Mr. Gilbert as he was returning by train from New York to his home in New Haven. He noted the girders being installed by the New Haven R.R. as part of an electrification program, went to work that night with scissors and cardboard, and soon had a model. The toy met almost immediate popularity.

Mr. Gilbert was born Feb. 15, 1884, in Salem, Ore. Survivors include his widow, the former Mary Thompson of Seattle; two daughters, Mrs. Charlotte Chase and Mrs. Lucretia Rowbottom; a brother, F. W. Gilbert, and the son.

## End of the Line For A. C. Gilbert

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — A. C. Gilbert Co., once a giant in the toy industry, is getting ready to call it quits after five straight years of losses, including a \$9,000,000 deficit for 1966.

The company is half-owned by Wrather Corp. Gilbert said it is negotiating to sell its patents and toy lines to Gabriel Industries.

## Lionel-Am. Flyer

New York, May 26, (UPI)—Two old-line railroads have merged and there doesn't appear to be much the Interstate Commerce commission can do about it, even if it wanted to.

Lionel corporation has purchased the American Flyer line from A. C. Gilbert company—lock, stock, and cinder box—for an undisclosed amount of cash.

Lionel made the announcement at the annual meeting of shareholders. Robert A. Wolfe, president, said American Flyer trains will be coming out of the Lionel barns later this year.

## Gilbert Co. Plans to Sell Its Toy Lines

A. C. Gilbert Co., the financially troubled toy maker, said it has agreed to sell its manufacturing rights and toy lines to Gabriel Industries, New York.

Gilbert said payment would be determined primarily on the basis of sales of these lines over the next 12 years.

The sale to Gabriel, also a toy manufacturer, must be approved by Gilbert stockholders, who are expected to meet in either March or April.

GILBERT has been widely known toy maker for 58 years. The most popular toys produced at the New Haven (Conn.) plant are Erector sets and American Flyer electric trains.

The company recently announced it is going out of business. Its losses totaled nearly \$20,000,000 in the last five years. Management said Gilbert's liabilities exceed its assets by about \$12,000,000.



## Victim of Space Age

# Proud Toy

By David Hall

The sophisticated toys of A. C. Gilbert Co. introduced millions of children to the wonders of science and technology.

But the once-proud toy maker — known for Erector sets, American Flyer trains, chemistry sets and microscopes — is broke and going out of business, a victim of the progressive era its toys had symbolized.

The tragedy may not be complete. Names like Erector and American Flyer are valuable. They can be disposed of, probably for a handsome price, and Gilbert is now trying to sell its famous trademarks to another toy maker, Gabriel Industries, in New York.

### WHAT KILLED Gilbert?

Toy industry people say it was a failure to adapt marketing and production to the space age of the '50s and '60s—an irony for a company built around scientific and educational toys.

Gilbert tried to catch up. It

supplemented its famous line with novelty toys based on the craze for superpies James Bond, Honey West and The Man from U.N.C.L.E.

But the new Gilbert toys never sold well.

- Some think Gilbert should never have entered the novelty field. The head of a large State Street department store said: "They went too far out. Gilbert drifted away from a solid, bread-and-butter item the public was familiar with."

- Advertising men say Gilbert was too slow to realize that toys sales depended heavily on television, less on catalogs and window displays.

Gilbert did launch an imaginative television program series in 1965, with Beatle music and cartoons of the mop-haired British screamers. It was a good effort, an advertising executive said, but too little too late.

- Poor quality of new products and deteriorating quality of standard items also is blamed.

Sales Management maga-

# Maker at End of Road

\$300,000 in 1962 to \$9,000,000 in 1966, or a cumulative loss of nearly \$20,000,000 for the five years.

The company estimated that the excess of its liabilities over its assets is more than \$12,000,000. A statement added that "substantially all of Gilbert's assets are subject to liens" and that proceeds of any sales are not expected to cover debts.

**THE CURRENT** efforts to sell what assets the company can must be approved by stockholders, expected to meet in March or April.

Several efforts were made in the last few years to save the company, but they only postponed the collapse.

About 51 per cent of Gilbert's stock was acquired in 1962 by Wrather Corp., a California holding company specializing in television film series (Lassie, the Lone Ranger), resort hotels and oil wells.

Wrather's president, John

D. (Jack) Wrather, 48, revamped Gilbert's management. Alfred Carlton Gilbert Jr., son of the man who invented the Erector set and founded the company in 1909, remained as chairman — but his power was cut.

**IN 1963**, Wrather brought in Anson Isaacson as chief operating officer. Isaacson, former vice president of Ideal Toy Co., became president in June, 1964, when A. C. Gilbert Jr. died.

Isaacson, described as a "toy genius," expanded the product line and boosted sales. But he couldn't stem the steady losses.

The company had to borrow heavily to operate. (It has

been reported that Isaacson himself put up \$250,000 of a \$1,000,000 emergency loan). And this too, became a severe problem last year when money markets tightened.

**NOW AT** Gilbert's headquarters in New Haven, on "Erector Square," the office staff answers phones, but callers are referred to New York, where Gilbert's officers are negotiating to sell patents and trademarks.

The work force, many of whom have worked for Gilbert all their lives, is idle.

It is an inglorious situation for a company that grew from the imaginative mind of one man to delight generations of American children.



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